THE ONE THING Necessary: OR, CHRIST's Justification OF *MARY'S* CHOICE; AND OF HIS SERVANTS Wrongfully Accused.

By *Richard Baxter.*

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THE
PREFACE.

IT *is not a needleſs Subject which I here offer about* needleſs *or* leſs needful things. *Little do moſt men think how much of their Wiſdom or Folly lyeth in their right or wrong valuing and uſing things lawful, and that have an inferiour ſort of Goodneſs; and how much their Salvation or Damnation is herein concerned. Men are condemned for an* Evil Love, *but not for the*

Love *of* Evil *as* Evil: *Nature is againſt that. To love a leſſer Good too much, and a greater too little; to love the End but as the Means, and the Means as the End, is an evil Love;* Non malum volumus, ſed malè: *It is the Act that is evil when the Object is good, either indeed, or in the Apprehenſion of the Lover. He may will Hurt as Hurt to another; but it is as conceited to be ſome good to himſelf. Apprehenſion of Good or Evil, that is,* practical Judgment *ruleth the* Wills *and Actions of the World; of how great Moment then is it to have a truly informed Judgment, and to have Teachers that will thus truly inform us; not about matter of meer Talk and Diſpute,*

that

that little concerneth us, but about that which is good or evil to ourselves, and to know indifferent things to be indifferent. It is the pernicious enmity of the fleshly Appetite to the Soul, that it byasseth the practical Judgment and Will to take things indifferent to be good and desirable, and almost necessary; and a small sensible good to be a great one, and a great good which displeaseth Sense and Appetite, to be small, if not a hurtful Evil.

And indeed the Holy Ghost hath told us, Rom. 8. 5, 6, 7, 8. *That this is the difference betweeen the truly godly and ungodly, That one is spiritually minded, and the other carnally; that is, one savoureth things spiritual, and judgeth of things ac-*

cording to ſpiritual Reaſon and Intereſt, and loveth and chooſeth them for ſpiritual goodneſs; but the Carnal have no ſuch Guſt, Judgment or Love, but value things as the Appetite and Intereſt of the Fleſh inclineth them. Be they both of the ſame Calling, Education and Profeſſion; if both were Paſtors of the ſame Churches, and Preachers of the ſame Doctrine, yet this difference is at the Hearts of ſpiritual and carnal Men; and it uſually appeareth to others in their Lives: If they be publick Perſons, they will ſhew men what things they value, and what gain it is that they purſue. The Fleſh loveth not Mortification, nor the Croſs; it is always againſt ſpiritual Laws and Life, and ſpiri-

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tual Worſhip and Perſons, ſo far as they croſs their carnal Intereſt. He that will worſhip God that is a Spirit, in Spirit and Truth, muſt have a Judgment that moſt valueth ſpiritual things, and place his Love and Hope on ſpiritual Delights and Happineſs. A carnal Mind that ſavoureth only carnal things, and neither is, nor can be ſubject to God's ſpiritual Law, will hardly reliſh ſpiritual Worſhip, or a ſpiritual kind of Life.

One of the greateſt ſigns of an Hypocrite is, making a great matter of little (*wordly and fleſhly*) things, *and making a little matter of great things. All the things of the Fleſh and World are* things indifferent *in themſelves, or almoſt*

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indifferent, further than their Relation to ſpiritual good doth make them become good or evil; good if they further it, and evil if they hinder it. But the Hypocrite is never indifferent toward them; he feeleth no great need of ſpiritual thoughts, ſpiritual Counſel, or Diſcourſe, or Preaching, or Books, or Company: Perhaps he can bear them, *but he can be* without them; *and doth neither* much deſire *them or* delight *in them. A Hiſtory, or Romance, or merry Jeſt, or Game, is pleaſanter to him. But his Thoughts are ſerious for his carnal Commodity, Pleaſure and Reputation;* what he ſhall eat and Drink, and wherewith he ſhall be cloathed. *If his Houſe, his Maintenance, his Meat*

and

and Drink be not such as the Flesh desireth, especially if it be put to Streights and Sufferings; his Sense of it is as quick, and his Complaint as serious as if he were half undone, or it were some great matter at least that he complaineth of. The Complaints and Tears of many that are in some Streights or Sufferings, should cause wiser Tears from serious Believers, to see men so miserably carnal, like Children that cry for a Pin or a Feather, as if they had lost their greatest good.

Seriousness *is it that sheweth what is next to a man's Heart. It is* Seriousness and Earnestness about fleshly Vanity, and want of Seriousness about things Spiritual and Eternal, which is the Tem-

Temperament and Character of the Hypocrite.

And here I would intreat ſome that I hope are godly, to forbear ſo ſuſpicious and diſgraceful a courſe, as they are openly guilty of; I mean, when they talk ſo concernedly *and* eagerly *about their* Meat, *and* Drink, *and* Cloaths, *and every fleſhly thing, as if their Hearts were ſet upon it. Paſſion and chiding if all be not as their Fancies or Appetite would have it, doth ſhew that they are dangerouſly diſeaſed at leaſt. This Meat is not well dreſt, and the other is too little or too much; and that Sawce is not rightly made, and ſomething or other is ſtill amiſs: And all theſe are talkt of as ſeriouſly, as if the fleſhly Appetite were the*

the Man. *In a word*; *the more* ſerious *any man is about* great things, *the more* indifferent *he will be about* things indifferent: *And the more* indifferent *a man is about the* greateſt things, *the more* earneſt *and* ſerious *will he be about* things indifferent; *and* vice verſâ, *the more* ſerious *he is about* things indifferent, *the more* indifferent *he will be about the* One Thing Neceſſary. *Taking great things for ſmall, and ſmall things for great; neceſſary things for indifferent, and indifferent or ſmaller things for neceſſary, is the Folly, and the Sin, and the Damnation of the Ungodly. And becauſe all men* will do *as they* are, *it is alſo the Corrupter, Troubler and Divider of the Chriſtian Societies,*

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in Doctrine, Worſhip, Diſcipline and Converſation; and the Confounder of the World: Of which Faith *and* ſerious Godlineſs *is the* Remedy, *which valueth and uſeth all things as they are.*

Septemb. 29.
1684.

THE

THE
One Thing Neceſſary:
OR,
MARY'S Choice Juſtified.

LUK. 10. 41.

Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art carefull and troubled about many things; but one thing is needfull.

HAving long ago publiſhed ſome Sermons on the *One thing needful*, in a Treatiſe called, *A Saint or a Bruit*, I find by more experience than I had then, that it is more neceſſary to ſay ſomething on the former part of the Text than I thought it was: I then lived among poor labouring honeſt People, who had indeed ſome

temptations from *outward wants*, but little from *wealth* and *ſuperfluities*, nor had leiſure to waſte time upon ſo many trifles, as I ſee rich and idle Perſons think they have.

It is here very conſiderable, 1. That the *Author* of this Reproof, was one who was not to be ſuſpected to miſtake through *ignorance* or *want of love* to *Martha:* And though *he* lived in a *low manner*, and not as the *rich*, yet it was not becauſe he *wanted* ſuch things, that he blameth the minding of *unneceſſary things*. For he was *Lord of all*; and *for our ſakes he became poor*, yet ſuffered as *rich men* that are ſuppoſed to be uſually the greateſt ſinners. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.* Iſa. 53. 9.

2. And that his Reproof was very Serious and Compaſſionate, repeating her Name, *Martha, Martha.*

3. The Perſon *Reproved*, was not a *wicked*, fleſhly, worldly Perſon, but one that was *beloved* by him, and a religious Believer.

4. The *matter* which ſhe is reproved for, is partly *poſitive expreſſed* (*being carefull and troubled about many things*,) and

and partly implyed as *privative*; not *preferring the one thing needfull* at that time ſo much as ſhe ſhould have done: Which implyeth, 1. That the *many things* were *needleſs*, or *leſs needful* things. 2. That they took up both her *unſeaſonable time*, and the cares of her mind, unto her trouble.

I need no more words to convince you, that Chriſt here teacheth us this Leſſon, *viz.*

That Care and Trouble about many needleſs or leſs needful things, hindering them from the due minding of the one thing needfull, is a ſin which Chriſt reproved in Martha, and therefore blameth in all others who are guilty of it.

Here, I. Let us conſider what *Martha*'s ſin in particular was. II. Whether we are not like to be more guilty of the like. III. In what kind this ſin is uſually committed. IV. What are the excuſes for it. V. What is the evil of it, which deſerveth ſuch Reproof. VI. What uſe we ſhould make of Chriſts Reproof.

I. *Martha*'s Sin (already mentioned) was *over-much Care and Trouble* about

her *Table* for Chriſts Entertainment, while *Mary* ſate hearing his holy Diſcourſe; which ſhewed that ſhe had *leſs Appetite* than *Mary* to the Holy Doctrine of Chriſt, that could eaſilyer be without it. 2. And that ſhe over-valued the lower part, his bodily entertainment.

Yet there were theſe extenuations of it, 1. It was not doing any *ſinful* work in it ſelf.

2. It was not *needleſs* in *its time* and *meaſure.*

We are allowed to pray for our daily Bread; and here is no mention of any ſuperfluities or exceſs: And ſo worthy a Gueſt deſerved the beſt Proviſions; and it's probable that *Martha* was the chief Houſe-keeper, to whom it moſt belonged. And no doubt it was a work of *Love and Honour* to Chriſt: Yet though it was for his *own Perſon*, and had ſuch excuſes, Chriſt would not take part with it, or forbear to blame it.

And indeed one half of her fault lay in *blaming her Siſter* that was wiſer, and *choſe better* than her ſelf; and Chriſt ſpake this as much to juſtifie *Mary*, as to blame *Martha*, as the following words ſhew.

II. And

II. And if we judge but by her quality and caſe, and ours, we are far liker to be thus culpable than *Martha* was. For, 1. That Countrey was poor in compariſon of ours, and had not half the Temptations to many needleſs things, as we have by our Riches and their effects.

2. Chriſt would not have endured ſuch Vanities and Exceſſes as we are uſually guilty of.

3. It's like *Martha* that was ſo Familiar with Chriſt, was leſs addicted to Vanites than we now are.

4. Our Common Vanities, for which few of the better ſort blame themſelves, have no ſuch extenuations or excuſes as the Caſe of *Martha* had.

III. But we need no more to convince us, than to name ſome of the many inſtances, in which our ſin is far, yea, very far worſe than *Martha's*.

1. How much of moſt mens thoughts and time, is taken up with the *needleſs cares* to grow *richer*, and be better provided in the world? from one end of the year to the other, how great a por-

portion is thus laid out? Cannot we ſerve Gods Providence, and labour in our Callings, and do our Duty without ſuch a meaſure of *Care* and *Trouble?* Into how narrow a conpaſs do worldly cares and troubles caſt Gods Service, and mens cares and thoughts of their endleſs ſtate in the hearts and houſes of moſt men! Theſe thorns and briars are ſo rank and plentiful, that they choak much of the Seed of the Goſpel, and make true Godlineſs and Heavenly Delight to wither away and come to little.

2. How many needleſs *Cares* and *Troubles* have moſt, about *Gods part and Providence*, which belongs not to them; fearing what may befall them, leſt they ſhould be poor, or oppreſſed, or ſuffer by others; when they ſhould ſpend thoſe thoughts in caring for *their Duty*, and truſting the Love and Faithfulneſs of God? And no other care will avoid their ſuffering.

3. How much needleſs, yea and bruitiſh thoughts and works, have many to pleaſe and gratifie their Appetites? What a baſe and yet coſtly ſervice have they that ſerve a greedy throat, and a beaſtly fantaſie? Had

Had God taken away many mens Health and Appetite, that meat and drink had been loathſome to them, it had been a Mercy to many ſuch; who by the Pleaſure that they have in theſe, are made ſlaves to the fleſh, and ſinks of ſhamefull ſin, and the foot-ball of temptations, and live under continual wounds of Conſcience, and when the Cup is abſent, they are ſinning in their imaginations and deſires, and are contriving how the next meal or day to gratifie their Appetites again: I ſpeak not of the *reeling befooled Drunkard*, or the ſpewing Glutton, but of them whoſe *Care* is for Throat and Belly, that make a *great matter* of the pleaſing or diſpleaſing of their Appetites, and think and talk of it ſo ſeriouſly, as if it were ſome needfull or importaut thing; that are *diſpleaſed* in *mind* if their *throats be not pleaſed*, and they fare not ſumptuouſly or deliciouſly every day: When the poor *Iſraelites* had not taſted Bread or Fleſh for many years in a Wilderneſs, nor ſo much as the *Ægyptian* Onions, but only Manna, they are killed by Gods Juſtice becauſe they murmured; and when they asked Fleſh, its ſaid,

They asked Meat for their Luſts, Pſal. 78. That is, *For their meer Appetites*, without neceſſity, for life or health: but how much further do moſt go now, exceeding even the Princes or great men in *Iſrael* in the matter and manner of their dyet, (as I believe the moſt in *England* do) and yet never blame or ſuſpect themſelves! *Turks* can forbear Wine at *Mahomets* Command, and the *Rechabites* becauſe their Father bid them; and if the Phyſician forbid Strong drink or Wine to the Sick, they can forbear; but ſenſual ſinners will rebel againſt God for their deſired bait, and their heart and thoughts are ſet upon it.

4. How much alſo of many vain Peoples thoughts and care is ſpent about *needleſs Ornaments* of *Apparel?* Do we need any other Proof than the opening of our eyes in the Streets, yea, in the holy Aſſemblies, as well as in places of evil fame: *Dives* is noted by Chriſt to wear Purple and Silk, or as we tranſlate it, fine Linnen; and then thoſe that were gorgeouſly Apparelled, were in *Kings Houſes*; but how few here of the vulgar, yea of Servants, affect it not now, that can but procure it! If the

the higheſt do but take it up, inferiours quickly ſtrive to immitate them: In my ſhort time, the Garb of *England* is ſo changed, that but fifty years ago, men would have gazed at ſuch as painted *Indians* or outlandiſh Strangers, or ugly Ruffians, that had gone as moſt civil and religious People do in this City now. *Paul* would have forborn *Wine and Fleſh while he had lived*, rather than his liberty ſhould hurt his weak Brothers Soul: But if the Scandal of our Pride or Gawdery do make many weak Perſons turn Quakers to fly from it, how few for to avoid this, would avoid the moſt gawdy and effeminate, or ruffianly faſhion of Cloaths or Hair? And inſtead of receiving Reproof from ſuch Quakers, they are hardened the more, becauſe of the weakneſs of their reprovers. I am loth to name thoſe gawds with which eſpecially the Female Sex do openly ſhew their Vanity, which tell all beholders what *needleſs trifles* take up much of their time, and coſt, and care: And, alas for mens ſtupid Folly; All this is while thouſands *want Food and Rayment*; while whole Countreys are impoveriſhed by cruel

Wars, when dreadful Flames have conſumed our Wealth, and rebuked our Pride, and humbling Diſeaſes have ſhewed us what fleſh is, and when our daily *feeling* tells us it is periſhing, and while we are going to a loathſome Grave, and ſee the Duſt and bones of thoſe whom we are following; and the plain warnings of *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4, 5, 6. and many ſuch ſtand in the Bible as cyphers to them.

5. How many needleſs things take up the rich, about their *Houſes*, *Furniture*, *Retinue* and *Entertainments?* eſpecially thoſe that are moſt *Proud*, and moſt *Curious* and Vain. *Conveniencie* muſt be a pretence for ſinfull coſt and labour; *Handſomneſs* or *Decency* muſt be a pretence for needleſs charge in furniture, while the Poor goe almoſt naked; *Cleanlineſs* muſt be a pretence for their Servants ſpending much of the day and year in needleſs Vanities, which might be much better ſpent: Not to be *accounted Careleſs* or *Uncleanly* by others of the like Vanity, ſeemeth excuſe enough for a multitude of *needleſs Curioſities*: To *find poor People work* doth paſs for an excuſe, for imploy-

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ing Servants and Tradesmen in making and providing all these *Need-nots*, as if they might not have been better imployed for the common good, and encouraged to learn some better Trades; as if they knew not how narrow a Coffin, and little furniture must shortly serve them: The report of *good Housekeeping* and Entertainments must justifie the Excesses and chargeable needless superfluities of the rich.

6. What *needless Cares and business* have many to avoid the *contempt or hard thoughts of others!* How near goeth it to a proud Heart what is *thought and spoken* of them! And their *avoiding of contempt* must be the reason of most of the forementioned Vanities, in their Dress, their Houses, their Retinue, and the rest; when alas they have another kind of Judgment to prepare for, and they and those whose thoughts they so much regard, are almost dead and Dust already.

7. What a deal of some mens Care and Thoughts are spent in needless contrivances for Power and Greatness in the World! what works find some *Achitophels* and *Hamans* for their minds! As if

if it were needfull for a man to fall at laſt from a higher place than the reſt about him; or to have his will fulfilled by all others; or to have the Souls or Lives of many to anſwer for; or to be ſtronglyer allured to the damning Love of this World than other men; or to be envyed by many; or to be a Ruler of others, before one knoweth how to be Obedient to God, and to rule himſelf: And O what worſe than needleſs troubles, even horrible wickedneſs doth this Ambition lead many to! even to be the Plagues of the Earth, and incarnate Devils, by bloody Wars and cruel Oppreſſions, Deſolations and Perſecutions.

8. Yea ſome of lower rank have ſuch imperious idol Wills, that nothing *muſt croſs* them, or be ſaid or done by any about them, but as they would have it: And yet it's two to one but ſo *many perſons* and *things will croſs them*, and go quite contrary to their wills, as that their diſeaſe will be their *continual torment*: And they will be like one in Winter that cannot bear the cold, and yet *muſt* bear it, or like a poor man that is a Servant to his Appetite, and hath not

not wherewith to pleaſe it: or like one that dwelleth by the Sea, and cannot bear the ſight of the Waters, or in a Wood and cannot bear the ſhaking of a Leaf. Such worſe than needleſs troubles doth an *Idol Will* produce.

9. And how much time is loſt in vain and needleſs talk; about things not juſtly pleaſing, and no way profiting our ſelves and others! A vain Tongue being the Index of a vain Mind, as if Mind and Tongue had no higher or better Subjects or Imployment.

10. And in this City it is not a little time that is taken up with *needleſs Sports and Recreations:* I will not honour the *Gameſters* trade with ſo ſoft a Name as *Needleſs Work*; Nor the *Play-houſes*, nor the houſes of exceſs and luſt: But if Cards, Dice, and Stage-plays had never been branded and condemned by the Ancient Canons of the Chriſtian Churches, and did not notoriouſly bear the marks of Temptation and much groſs folly and ſin, yet *Vanity* and *Needleſneſs* ſhould be enough to make men, that believe another World and the ſhortneſs of this Life, to abhor them, and better ſpend their time. There is a ſort of Pleaſure and

and Recreation that is needful: That which fits us beſt for our neceſſary works and duty, preſerving by *motion* the *health of the body*, or refreſhing the weary Spirits of hard Students. But God hath left no man in ſuch a penury of Recreation, but that he may find more uſeful, profitable, manly, time-ſaving and ſafe ones, than Gaming, or Stage-Plays, or Romances, and ſuch enſnaring befooling unprofitable Time-waſters are.

11. And among all the needleſs deceitful vanities, *unprofitable Studies* and Arts are not the leaſt: When *Cornelius Agrippa* had ſtreined his Brain to ſuch Curioſities that he paſſed for a Conjurer, and had written a Commentary upupon *Lullius* his Arts after many others; he concludeth all with an honeſt and Chriſtian like Treatiſe, *De Vanitate Scientiarum*, commending the Study and Practice of Gods Word as the only true Wiſdom: And though I have marveled at the *Carthage* Council, which forbad the reading of Heathens Books, I never wondered that mens *Exceſs* herein ſhould be rebuked, nor that *Paul* called men to beware leſt they were deceived by *vain Philoſophy*, and to avoid *oppoſition*

poſition of *Sciences, falſly ſo called:* Languages, Logick, Metaphyſicks, Phyſicks, Mathematicks, *&c.* have their uſe; But he is a Learned man indeed who rightly applyeth them to that uſe, and ſeparateth the needfull from the needleſs part, the certain from the uncertain, truth from falſhood and preſumptuous Conceits; the plauſibleneſs of the thing inviteth many to waſte their time in unprofitable Studies, who durſt not have ſpent it in Play-houſes and Gaming; and yet I doubt to many it will prove no better.

Qu. *But the doubt is, What are theſe needleſs ſinfull things, That ſeemeth needleſs to one that is not ſo indeed, or to another?* Cynicks *call Decencies, and Ornaments, and Conveniencies, and Pleaſure, needleſs.*

Anſ. 1. *That is needleſs which doth no goood.*

2. Thoſe things that do *more hurt* than good.

3. Thoſe things which *anſwer not the coſt and labour* which is beſtowed for them.

4. Thoſe things that are good, but hinder and deprive us of a *greater good,* which

which we may well ſpare, but are hinderances to the one thing neceſſary, which we cannot ſpare; all theſe are certainly needleſs, if not worſe.

But becauſe vain Perſons are hardly Convinced, 'till God by Light or Fire do convince them, I will help them by theſe few queſtions following.

Qu. 1. Is that act which you plead for, a thing which God doth any way *Command* you, directly or indirectly? If not, how can it be *needfull* to you? you will ſay, Are there not ſome things *Indifferent* and *lawfull*, which are *no duties? Anſ.* 1. There are *natural* things which are not *moral*; (either Virtue or Vice) as your Health or Sickneſs, and ſuch things as are Gods works and not yours; of theſe I ſpeak not. 2. There are *Actions* of *your own* which are *meerly natural*, neither commanded nor forbidden, and that is all thoſe which are no matter for *Rational chooſing or refuſing*, ſuch as have no moral uſe; as winking with the eye, which foot I ſhall firſt put forward; which of two equal things, in meat, drink, Apparel, *&c.* I ſhall *take*, (not *chooſe*;) when it is needfull that I do one, but it's perfectly indiffe-

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rent which: But the things which I am ſpeaking of are of no ſuch nature, but ſuch as belong to Rational choice, and are accordingly choſen by you.

Qu. 2. Would your Conſciences trouble you for it as any ſin, if you omitted the thing which I call needleſs? I ſuppoſe not.

Qu. 3. Is it to pleaſe God as an act of Obedience that you do them? Is your Curioſity, and your vain Attire, and the reſt forementioned choſen to *pleaſe God*, or to *pleaſe your fleſhly Senſe* and Phantaſie, or the World?

Qu. 4. Will it be any *hurt* to you, or real *loſs*, if they be omitted, or be denyed you?

Qu. 5. Have you got any thing by them already, or not loſt more than you have gotten.

Qu. 6. Are they things that the *better*, or the *worſer* ſort of Perſons more mind and plead for? whoſe Delights are Cards and Dice, and Plays, and vain Faſhions? Is it the moſt *Heavenly*, or the moſt *Fleſhly* Perſons that are moſt eager of them, and moſt uſe them?

Qu. 7. Do you find that they more

help

help or *hinder* you in Prayer and other holy Exerciſes? eſpecially your heavenly Delights?

Qu. 8. How do they reliſh with you when you think of Death and Judgment? Are they a comfortable part of your Preparation? Had you rather then review and anſwer for your time ſpent in theſe, than in greater things?

If you will but ſet Conſcience to anſwer theſe Queſtions, methinks you ſhould ſoon perceive your ſelves, what things they be that are needleſs, and therefore not to be choſen, and conſequently unlawfull.

But that you may ſee that I drive you not to any extreams, I ſhall negatively add,

1. I do not number all our thoughts, care and labour for our Bodies, Children or others, about things needfull and convenient, to be theſe *needleſs* things.

2. Nor is our diligent labour in a conſtant Calling needleſs; he that will not labour, St. *Paul* ſaith, *ſhould not eat*; This is a part of our Obedience to God, *Six dayes ſhalt thou labour.*

3. Nor is it needleſs to labour for more

more than we need our ſelves, that we may *have to give to him that needeth*, and to do *good* to others.

4. Nor is it needleſs to do our beſt for our bodily health, to fit our Bodies to be able and chearfull ſervants to our Souls: That Food, that Recreation and Pleaſure, which is neceſſary to fit Body or Mind for Service, and the work of a Chriſtian Life, is not vain.

5. All men are not called to the ſame kind of Labour and employment; that is needfull to one, which is not to another.

6. The loweſt things which we do in Obedience to God, if it were but ſweeping the Streets or Chimneys, is not to be numbred with the needleſs things, but rather a comfortable exerciſe of Humility and Obedience.

But every man muſt prefer the greateſt thing.

IV. *What are the common excuſes of this Sin?*

Obj. 1. Some ſay, that it is but few Perſons, at leaſt not all, that are fitted for, and called to great employments; they that cannot do greater matters, muſt do leſſer. *Anſ.*

Anſ. All are not called to Govern Kingdoms, nor to be Teachers and Paſtors of the Church; but all have ſome Talent, which they muſt uſe and anſwer for; and all may do ſomewhat which tendeth to the common good; the Servant or Labourer that Ploweth, Soweth and Reapeth, doth ſerve the Common-wealth; and if his Maſter live idly, and ſpend his time in Gaming, Plays, or other vanity, can he excuſe it by pleading a greater incapacity than his Servant had? A Maſon, a Carpenter, a Tailor, a Sweep-chimney, do that which is needfull to be done; and ſhall rich men live idly, and do no good, becauſe they are rich?

Obj. 2. *I was not bred up to labour, they that were bred up to it, muſt uſe it.*

Anſ. If you were not bred up to ſome Calling or Employment, profitable to your ſelf and others, you were bred in ſin, and then it's time to break it off; *Idleneſs*, with *Pride* and *Fulneſs*, are noted to have been *Sodoms* ſins; and will you not amend, becauſe you were bred in ſin? can you bear the doom of the unprofitable, ſlothful Servant, *Math.* 25? Or will it excuſe you becauſe you have

have been ſlothfull from your youth?

Obj. 3. *God doth not require toil and labour from thoſe that are rich, and need it not.*

Anſ. God doth not require the *ſame kind* of labour from all; but if he give you more than the poor, he requireth not leſs but more from you; that is, your conſtant diligence in more profitable work; elſe you may as well ſay, That God is the Governour of none but the Poor, or that he looketh for leaſt Service, where he giveth moſt wages.

Your labour is not only to ſupply your own needs, but to profit others, and for the common good.

And the more you do in way of Duty, the more you receive and profit your ſelves. Idleneſs is your own loſs to Soul and Body.

Obj. 4. *Men need Recreation and Relaxation.*

Anſ. What do you need it for? Is it not for your work, and your health, to enable you to work? Uſe no more than furthereth your health and work, and that ſhall not be called needleſs.

Obj. 5. *Little things are uſefull in their places*; Chriſt ſaith of ſome ſuch, *Theſe ought*

ought ye to have done, and not to leave th
other undone.

Anſ. No doubt but there are thing
good and needfull of ſeveral degrees
all are not of the *moſt needfull* kind
But what's this to that which is *no*
needfull? or that hindereth more need
full things, as afore deſcribed?

Obj. 6. *Old men are incompetent Judg*
es of the caſe of Youth, as not havin
their inclinations to Sports and Pleaſures
and all men, eſpecially Divines and Law
yers, and ſuch like grave men, who ar
themſelves taken up with greater matters
are incompetent Judges of the affairs of Wo
men, their Cloaths, their Furniture, thei
Expences and their Imployments, and ar
apt to call all needleſs, which is below thei
work.

Anſ. Yet Chriſt thought himſelf meet
to judge of the choice of *Martha* and
Mary, and *Solomon* to give directions to
Women, and ſo did St. *Peter* and St.
Paul: Old men were once young, and
know what youthfull inclinations are,
and grave men that live among Women,
ſee their buſineſs, and know their rea-
ſons: And if all ſorts of perſons ſhall
judge *Miniſters*, *Lawyers* and *Judges* in-
competent

competent to judge of their Tradings, Actions and Affairs, and ſo appropriate the judgment of them to themſelves alone, then all perſons will by their own judgments be alwaies in the right, and none will be capable of amendment; the Proverb is, *A ſtander by may ſee more than a Player*; but it is confeſſed that a juſt Judge muſt hear and conſider the whole caſe.

Obj. 7. *We ſhall be derided if we are ſingular.*

Anſ. Will God deride you for obeying him? hath not he ſaid, *Be not conformed to this world?* You will be derided and *perſecuted* too by wicked men, if you will be true to Chriſt, to Godlineſs, Sobriety and Honeſty, and is that a good reaſon why you ſhould be ſenſual, worldly and ungodly?

V. But what is the ſin here Reproved, *&c?* What harm is it to be thus carefull and troubled about many things, that are not comparatively needfull?

Anſ. 1. To preferr little things before greater, and thus to imploy our ſelves, is a *wilfull debaſing of our Souls*, which ſhould be exerciſed about that which

which is anſwerable to the dignity o
their natures; as it is a debaſing of
Prince to uſe him as Beggars, or in ſor
did work; and as it were below a wiſ
man to talk at the rate of Fools an
Children; ſo is it a debaſing of a Sou
that is made for things of endleſs con
ſequence, to imploy it upon needleſ
trifles. Pride maketh men think wel
of themſelves, and look high in th
world, and diſdain to be ſet low in
mens thoughts, words or employments;
and yet when God commandeth them
to look higher, they chooſe a low and
ſordid life.

2. It is a *wilfull contempt* of the *moſt excellent things:* God and our Redeemer, Grace and Glory are before us, and ſhould be remembred and ſought in the firſt place; and it is a contempt o them, needleſly to turn from them our minds and time to vanity: The mind of man is not infinite, but narrow, and cannot be employed on many things a once; if it be taken up with trifles, it cannot chooſe but neglect greater things: And for God, and Chriſt, and Heaven to be ſet by, while we play with toyes, is profane Contempt.

Obj

Obj. *We cannot be alwaies thinking of God and Heaven.*

Anſ. But you muſt alwaies be ſerving God in one kind or other, and alwaies doing that which tends to Heaven; as you are not all day meditating of the Light, but you are all day uſing it.

3. This taking up our minds and time with needleſs things, is a great *injury to our ſelves, by neglect of our own greateſt benefit and neceſſities:* Did but men know what they have to mind and ſeek, it would be their ſpeedy cure. Alas, we are all behind hand in our great and neceſſary buſineſs; and theſe Triflers uſually are more behind hand than others: They have more to do of unſpeakable conſequence, than all their time and diligence will ſerve for, as it deſerveth, (having loſt ſo much already) and yet have they ſo much to ſpare for trifles?

O that theſe Loyterers knew their neceſſity and their work. 1. You have a God to know, of whom you are too ignorant; you have his Word and Will to know, which you are yet much unacquainted with. 2. Do you know what

it is to get, keep, uſe and ſtrengthe
a lively belief of the Word of Go
and the unſeen World? 3. Do y
know what it is to get aſſurance th
God is your reconciled Father, th
Chriſt and Salvation are yours? th
you are truly ſanctified, and ſhall li
in Heaven for ever? 4. Do you kno
what it is to get the Heart in Lo
with God, and to long after Comm
nion with him in Glory? 5. Do y
know what it is to get down all t
luſts of the fleſh, and watch againſt
the ſnares of ſenſe and vain imagin
tion, and to eſcape the love of the
alluring pleaſures, and the danger
particular ſins of ſenſuality? 6. D
you know what it is to ſubdue all yo
carnal affections and paſſions, and
get in their ſtead a zeal for God, a
to be fervent in his Service? 7. D
you know what it is to get above t
love of Riches, and to eſcape all t
ſnares of Covetous deſires? 8. Do y
know what it is to keep a holy gover
ment of your thoughts, and to empl
them in their proper work? 9. Do y
know what it is to rule your tongu
in forbearing evil, and uſing them f
th

that which they are made for? 10. And do you know what the ſpiritual, ſincere and conſtant uſe of all Gods Worſhip is, Word, Prayer, Sacraments, *&c?* 11. Do you know what it is to renew Repentance for our renewed ſins? 12. And to keep down all Pride, and to walk humbly before God and man? 13. Do you know what it is to love others as your ſelves; to do as much good to all mens Souls and Bodies as you can? 14. And what it is to diſcharge all the duties of your ſeveral relations, to all your ſuperiours, inferiours and equals? 15. And what it is to find out the corruptions and deceitfulneſs of your own hearts, and well to underſtand your ſelves? 16. And what it is to underſtand the nature and danger of all Satans temptations, and to eſcape or overcome them? 17. And what it is to obey all the motions of Gods Spirit? 18. And to uſe all our daily Mercies well? 19. And to bear Afflictions patiently and profitably? 20. And to be above the love of this body and life, and ready to dye? 21. And to live in the joy and comfort which beſeemeth the Children of God, the mem-

bers of Chriſt that wait in hope of endleſs glory? Do but underſtand what all or half this is, and conſcionably do it, and then ſpend the reſt of your time in Cards, Dice, Playes, vain Adornings, Curioſities and other trifles.

4. Conſider alſo that Time and Life are very ſhort and very uncertain, and therefore not to be ſpent on needleſs things by one that ſtandeth at the door of eternity.

5. The experience of other men ſhould move us: All right repenting men, and moſt dying men, wiſh that their time had not been ſo waſted, but ſpent on that which was neceſſary to the great ends of life.

6. Conſcience telleth moſt that have not feared it, that at Death and Judgment we are like to wiſh that needfull things had taken up all our time.

7. It is a wrong to our great Creator and Preſerver, that we ſhould thus waſt our time while he maintaineth us, as if he gave us Life and Mercy for ſuch Vanity.

8. The Example of Chriſt and his Saints, is a reproof of all ſuch Vanity; we find not that they thus ſpent their thoughts and time.

VI. The

VI. The Uſes we ſhould make of this, are theſe:

I. Parents may hence learn, for what imployment they ſhould Educate their Children in the World, what they ſhould teach them, and to what Trades and Callings they ſhould ſet them; not to ſuch as will ſpend their Lives in Vanities; but ſuch in which they may be moſt uſefull to themſelves and others in the world: Not that all can be of the beſt or higheſt Callings, but all ſhould be educated for the moſt uſe and ſervice, and all employed in the beſt which they are fit for: It is a debaſing of your Children to intend them for no better than to live at eaſe to get money; a Heathen would tell you, that uſefulneſs to the Common-wealth is more to be regarded, and a Chriſtian knoweth that the ſerving of God in the greateſt profiting of our ſelves and others, muſt be preferred.

II. Let us all review our lives, and ſee here how much we have to repent of; and let us ſee alſo what cauſe of lamentation we have for the common

guilt of all ſorts, againſt theſe and ſuch like words of Chriſt.

But to prevent your miſunderſtanding of me, I firſt profeſs that I intend not to make you Cynicks, or Superſtitious, nor to perſwade you that it is neceſſary to your Salvation to live naſtily and undecently, nor that it is any part of your holineſs or perfection to be ſingularly ſordid, and to avoid things comely and convenient, as ſome old Hermits and Anchorites, and divers Popiſh Saints ſeemed to think: I am not drawing you to imitate that preſent Sect among us, that ſet up at firſt with a holineſs which conſiſted much in forbearing Cuffs, and Bands, and Hatbands, and Ribbans, and ſaying *Thou* inſtead of *You*, and withall in open reviling the moſt faithfull Miniſters. It is not a ſuperſtitious *Touch not*, *Taſte not*, *Handle not*, Col. 2. 20, 21. I am commending to you: But I fear leſt the contrary common extream be much more dangerous: I would not ſpeak againſt your ſmalleſt convenience, ſo far as it became not a time-waſting Snare, and hindred not your Heads, Hearts and Lives from greater neceſſary things. I know

know that when St *Paul* ſpeaketh often for providing things *honeſt*, and living honeſtly, he meaneth things decent and of good report; to expoſe ones ſelf, purpoſely to be laughed at, as St. *Francis* and ſuch others are ſaid to have done, is no juſt exerciſe of Piety, or Humility.

But alas what a doleful Spectacle is it, to one that believeth whither we are going, to ſee what it is that moſt men are doing, and what it is that they leave undone! I am not now ſpeaking of the time that is ſpent in *direct evil*; but little do men know how dangerouſly they ſin in ſpending too much in things that have *ſome good*, and in preferring *Conveniencies* and ſmall bodily Pleaſures and Commodities, before the *great and needfull things*; who can doubt but it was a decent and good thing for *Martha* to make Proviſion for Chriſt, and to attend and ſerve him? Are not moſt of your unſeaſonable Cares and Troubles, about much ſmaller matters than this? but at the time when greater things ſhould be done, even theſe are culpable Cares and Troubles; much more thoſe many

little trifles, which only Pride and Folly calleth needfull: And verily we have all ſo much of this *neceſſary work* to do, that leaveth us little room or time to ſpare for things which moſt men ſpend much of their Lives in; ſo great and urgent are our main concerns, as ſhould make every wiſe man ſtudy diligently to put by as many of the leſs diverting matters as he can: He that had Money to lay out for his ranſome, or for his life or neceſſary livelyhood, would ſpend little on ſmall matters, 'till he were ſure he had enough to ſpare. Hearken but wiſely to God and Conſcience; foreſee whither you are going, and what you have to do, and of what inconceivable importance, and then conſider whether you have room and time for all or any of thoſe diverting trifles which are the chiefeſt care and buſineſs of the unbelieving carnal world.

This needleſs buſineſs plainly ſheweth that you have low and little Souls: As Children playing in the Sand ſhew their difference from men that apply themſelves to manly buſineſs, ſo your over-buſineſs about your Ornaments, Dreſſes,

Dreſſes, Complements, Rooms, and many ſuch trifles, doth tell others (whether you will know it your ſelves or not) that you have both Childiſh underſtandings (and worſe becauſe you are at age) that ſet too much by little things, and that you have too much carnality of affection, when you have ſo much mind of trifling Need-nots: And worſt of all it plainly ſheweth that you greatly want a ſounder belief and deeper ſenſe of your great buſineſs and intereſt in the world, and live not in the ſenſe of the nearneſs of Death and things Eternal, as wiſe Believers ſhould ſtill do.

I am not ſaying, that you ſhould always have the ſinful fears and ſadneſs, which the Sentence of Death doth bring on moſt: I had rather you were quite above theſe to the laſt: Nor do I ſay that you ſhould always have juſt the ſame kind of paſſions, or do all things juſt in the ſame manner, as you ought to have and do, if you were ſure to dye to Morrow. But I muſt ſay, that you ſhould have the ſame Wiſdom, and the ſame eſteem of God, and of the World, of Soul and Body, of Heaven

and Earth, of Eternity and Time, of Duty and Sin, of Neceſſaries and Trifles, as you will then have; and the ſame holy affections, and diligence, and practice of Life, which this Wiſdom will then teach you to wiſh that you had ſooner had. O let there not be too great and ſhameful a difference between your Living and your Dying Thoughts. If your Father, or Child, or Husband, or Wife, were on their Death-bed or going to Execution, would not all be aſhamed of you, that ſhould hear you talk to them about Cards, or Plays, or fine Cloaths, or Laces, or greater worldly Toyes than theſe. Yea, if you were taken up your ſelves about your own Ornaments, Dreſſings, Curioſities, and troubleſome Triflings, who would not ſay that you were diſgracefully ſenceleſs of your own and your dying Friends Condition? O Promiſe not your ſelves more time than God hath promiſed you: Dream not that you dwell further from the Grave than you do: You know not what it is to live as Chriſtians or as Men, if you know not that all our Life ſhould be ſpent in our beſt preparation for Death. Though you muſt do much which you would

would not be juſt found doing, you muſt do nothing but what you can then Comfortably review, nor ſpend a moment in that, which then you muſt wiſh that you had not ſpent it in. And whether time-waſting trifles and Need-nots, will be comfortably remembred then, by one that hath Reaſon and Faith, and had ſo little time, and ſo much to do with it, methinks it might be eaſie to foreſee.

Verily, if you ſpent your time in no greater matters, than in getting Gold and worldly Glory, Crowns and Kingdoms, meerly for your Fleſh, and the greateſt Pleaſures of a carnal tranſitory Life, you will in the Everlaſting review, be confounded and tormented in remembring your ſelf-abaſing folly. And are your many little trifles then of more worth to make you a juſt excuſe? Gentlemen, Ladies and Gentlewomen; do not only bear with me, but be willing and thankful that I deal plainly with you, when it is not for me, but for your ſelves: It is ſuch as you that are moſt ordinarily and excuſably guilty of this Sin and Folly: The poor Labouring Countrey-man and Tradeſman indeed

is

is unexcuſable that will be diverted from the care of his Everlaſting ſtate, even by his moſt lawful and neceſſary Labours: But uſually their guilt is leſs far than yours, in all theſe following reſpects.

1. That which they do is profitable to the Common-wealth; and ſo is good, and part of their duty in it ſelf conſidered. To Plow, and Sow, and Reap, and make you Bread and Drink, and Cloaths, *&c.* But what good cometh to the Common-wealth by your Curioſities, and Vanities, and Plays, and Complements, though decency, and cleanlineſs, and handſomeneſs, and avoiding contempt and reproach be vainly pretended for them. They *gather*, and you *waſte:* They are the *Bees*, and you are the *Drones:* They *labour*, and you *conſume it* on your Luſts and Fancies. God bid them *labour ſix daies*, but he never bad you make ſuch a ſtir for meer unneceſſary vanities.

2. *Neceſſity* is ſome reaſon for what *they* do, though it be no good excuſe for leaving undone greater things. They muſt maintain themſelves and Families, and pay you your Rents: But what

what neceſſity have you to waſte thoughts and times about your many unprofitable Toyes? *Martha* had ſome excuſe, but you have none.

3. God giveth you more *Wages*, and therefore doth expect more *Work*: You are Stewards of more truſt, and therefore have more to give up an account of.

4. They can ſay, [Chriſt and his Apoſtles and all good men have laboured and done ſuch things as we do;] and it is part of his Law, that if we will not work we ſhall not eat; and *Solomons* Mother, a Queen, and he the wiſeſt King by her teaching, deſcribeth the Virtuous Woman to be one that worketh willingly with her hands on Wooll and Flax, that riſeth before day to look to her houſhold, and her Candle goeth not out by night; and eateth not the Bread of Idleneſs;] (when too many of the Rich do eat no other.) The labours of your Tenants have ſuch Preſidents as theſe. But have *you* any ſuch for your needleſs formalities and toyes? Did Chriſt or his Apoſtles ſpend their time in Prating of unprofitable things, or in Idleneſs, or Plays,

or

or Gaming, or in Childiſh neatifying their Bodies, or ſuch like? was St. *Peter* of your mind when he wrote to Chriſtian Women, 1 *Pet.* 3. 3. That *their adorning be not outward, of Plaiting the Hair, and of wearing Gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the Heart; in that which is not corruptible, even of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in Gods ſight of great price?* That is, regard that which is precious, and adorneth you in the ſight of God, and affect not neatneſs or coſtlyneſs, to make you ſeem either Rich or Comely in the ſight of Man, but cloath your corruptible fleſh with cheap and eaſie plainneſs, as beſeemeth thoſe that are going to the Grave. It is not *Apparel*, but *Ornaments* that he forbids, and a vain deſire by our Apparel to ſeem ſomewhat higher or handſomer than we are to men.

Perhaps you will ſay, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles were poor men, and therefore neither Patterns or fit Judges for you: *Anſ.* But yet they ſhall judge you, whether you will or not; And they who tell men by their lives, that they take not *their Doctrine*

or

or *example* for their Rule, or *Chriſt* for their *Governour*, ſhall find that unbelief and rebellion are not the way to their Juſtification. But though they that are gorgeouſlly cloathed then dwelt in Kings houſes, do you but read the 31. *Chapter* of the *Proverbs*, and take there the Counſel and Pattern of a Queen and King, and I will reprove you no more.

And you that are ſo regardful of the thoughts and eyes of men, and whoſe Pride maketh ſo great a matter of your reputation, that all about you be *ſightly* and lyable to no contempt, why do you not moſt regard your reputation with the *wiſeſt* and the *beſt*: St. *Peter* before told you what are the precious Ornaments in the ſight of God: And wiſe men and good men come neareſt to God in all their eſtimations. Who will beſtow much coſt or time, or hire Servants, to trim themſelves, or their Houſes, for Children or *Bedlams* to look on and admire? None but ſuch as your ſelves do think ever the better of you for all your coſtly or troubleſome curioſities; Wiſe men look at you as at Players, or Morice-dancers, ſome with

with Laughter, and all with pity; and think, what empty Souls are theſe that mind ſuch little Childiſh things?

And ſeeing common reaſon tells you, that a mans dignity or baſeneſs lyeth in the dignity or baſeneſs of the things which he mindeth, hopeth for and ſeeketh, and of the work in which his Life is ſpent, why will you ſet your ſelves ſo far below your poor Tenants and labouring Servants, as to chooſe imployments ſo far baſer than theirs? That is baſeſt which is moſt vain and of little benefit to your ſelves or others: Your Plowman, your Baker, your Brewer, your Cook, yea your Chimney-ſweeper live upon more uſeful employments, than ſome rich-vain-curious-idle perſons.

And as all ſin blindeth and befooleth ſinners, it's two to one but theſe ſelf-abaſing perſons will diſtaſte what I ſay, as thinking that it is againſt them. When common reaſon might tell them that all this that I ſpeak is *for them*, even for their Honour, their Commodity, their Conſcience, and their Salvation. Should I perſwade one that ſelleth Pins and Points, or the Scavin-

gers

gers that carry out Duſt and Dung, to become Merchants that trade for Gold and enriching Merchandize, few of them would be ſo ſottiſh as to think I ſpeak againſt them, to their diſhonour or their loſs.

And ſtill I confeſs that many little things are needful in their place and ſeaſon: We ſhould miſs Pins and Points if we were without them. Dirt and uncleanneſs muſt be ſwept and waſht away: Garments ſhould be warm and comely: Rooms that are convenient are deſirable; comely and ſtately buildings and furniture for Princes and Rulers are a due Ornament to Magiſtracy, and ſplendid Cities and Temples are an honeſt imitation of the great and glorious works of God: Sweet harmony and melody exhilerate the Spirits for and in Gods Holy Praiſe. All his Mercies ſhould be uſed to fit us, to ſerve him with gladneſs, and joyfulneſs of heart. It is not a Cynical Life that I plead for, but a baſe and childiſh life that I am diſpraiſing. When comelineſs and decency, and cleanlineſs and reputation is made a pretence for ſuch trifling away your

own

own and your Servants time, and ſetting up ſuch toyiſh trades and employments, as nothing but your own ſinful diſeaſe and folly could keep you from being aſhamed of, and your Conſciences from accuſing you for. I am aſhamed to name over the trifles within doors and without which I mean.

But Satan is ſubtil as well as malicious, and knoweth that all fiſh bite not at the ſame bait: Crowns and enlarged Dominions are the diverſions of ſome, who think their deſigns are high and honourable, while they go to damnation with more applauſe than worldly Peaſants: Brave Speculations and pleaſing Knowledge of things unneceſſary are the bait of others, that ſcorn to neglect God and caſt away their Salvation, for ſuch low and little things, as the Wanton and the Glutton, or Drunkard do. Yet theſe that are pleaſed in ſatisfying their Appetites, think that they make a wiſer bargain, and have ſomewhat more inſtead of Heaven, than ſick brained Childiſh Women, that have no better in exchange than things and buſineſſes which I am aſhamed to name.

O

O that God would awaken all our Reaſon by a lively Faith, to ſee where we ſtand, and what is before us, and with whom we have to do, and how little tranſitory things of the fleſh do ſignifie to a ſound underſtanding. We ſhould then ſee that Time and Life are of greater uſe, than to be plaid and fool'd away. Every moment of it would then appear to be very precious, and of great uſe. Whereas that is vile, which is good for nothing but vile employments: That hour which is uſeful for no greater work, than your trifling Need-nots, is of no greater worth than the work which it is for. Had you no more to do with it, how undeſirable were life: Surely the gain or pleaſure of an idle or a trifling life, will never compenſate the cares and troubles and ſufferings which we muſt all undergo. Were a Prince, Judge or Doctor ſet up as a Picture only to adorn a Room, or as a Mawkin to frighten away Crows from the Corn or Garden; this were not uſeleſs, yea it were better than many of your time-waſting vanities: But ſure it would be a great debaſing of ſuch perſons, as

ſcarce

ſcarce worth the coſt and trouble of living.

The Scripture tells us indeed, that *Man walketh in a vain ſhew*, and that *Verily every man at his beſt eſtate is Vanity*; yea, all under the Sun is *Vanity and vexation of Spirit*: But all this is ſaid only of man as ſeeking a Felicity in this world, and of all that he is and doth, with no higher reſpect than to the preſent Proſperity and pleaſure of the Fleſh: But there are greater things offered us which are not Vanity, even the pleaſing of God, and the fruition of his Love and Glory for ever; and were our life and time devoted to theſe high and noble Ends, were our waking and ſleeping, our eating and drinking, our health and ſickneſs, our labours, yea and our needful recreations, employed for theſe, and meaſured accordingly as means hereto, they would be holy and comfortable, and the loweſt things would be thus honoured and precious: They that are ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord, do find their labour not in vain, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. The ſame Houſe, Goods, Money, Food, Rayment,

ment, Time, as uſed by holy Believers and by carnal Worldlings, *&c.* differ more than we can now conceive; *HOLINESS TO THE LORD* is the name of the one, and *VANITY*, *VEXATION* and *SIN* of the other.

But alas, man who as a ſhadow paſſeth away, doth ſet his heart on tranſitory ſhadows, and dreaming, and ſeeming, and Stage-employments and enjoyments make up his hypocritical life and comforts: His Religion is naturally ('till Grace amend him) but *Shew* and *Ceremony*; his heart-work, and houſe-work, and publick-work is little but *Shadow* and *Ceremony*; Time is ſpent, and Money ſpent, and Talk ſpent, and Thoughts ſpent upon *Shadow* and *Ceremony*; Servants are imployed too often alſo in waſting their time, to ſerve their Maſters Fancies in meer *Shadow* and *Ceremony*: You can ſee and hear but little that is better, or of greater uſe in many rich perſons daily converſations, in their retinue, in their ſplendid houſes and curious adorned rooms, or any thing even of that which commandeth their hearts and time, and in which they place their dignity and plea-

pleaſure; 'till either Grace happily, o
Death miſerably awake their wit, an
then they cry out, *All is Vanity an*
Vexation; O that we had better ſpen
our time! *This their way is their folly*
and yet their poſterity approve their ſay
ings, Pſal. 49. 11, 12, 13. And ſtill other
riſe up that tread in their unhallowe
ſteps; and Satans Kingdom can truly
boaſt of an *uninterrupted Succeſſion*; ever
from the daies of *Cain*, 'till now.

I ſhall end with ſome *Directions how*
to judge of Needleſs things. 2. *And an*
anſwer to ſome Caſes of Conſcience.

I. 1. All things are culpably needleſs which anſwer not the coſt, and labour, and time which is laid out upon them: You may judge by the good which they are like to do.

2. Thoſe things are culpably needleſs, which are but to ſerve a *deſire or humour*, which we have no *need to pleaſe*; if the *Luſt* or Fancie be vain, the *Means* that ſerve it can be no better; whether it be the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, or pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the World. Men ſay, We *delight* in this or that, in curioſity, in coſtly or time-waſting ſports,

ſports, or ſuch as profit not their bodily health, in gawdy dreſſes or ſuch like; and why may we not gratifie our delight? why it is ſuppoſed to be a *needleſs unprofitable delight*, proceeding from a vain Fancy, which ſhould rather be cured than pleaſed.

3. All things are much more culpably needleſs, which proceed from a *Vicious ſinful humour, deſire or luſt*; *Make no proviſion for the fleſh, to ſatisfie the luſt thereof*, Rom. 13. 13, 14. To *mind* the things *of the fleſh*, is *enmity to God*, and to the minding of ſpiritual things, *Rom.* 8. 6, 7. Unneceſſary ſenſual delights corrupt the Soul, and ſtrongly turn down the mind from God and holy Pleaſures; and the mortifying of ſuch fleſhly Luſts or Pleaſures, is no ſmall part of our Religion.

4. All thoſe are culpably needleſs and worſe, which are preferred before truly needful things; and which are againſt them, and ſhut them out, or take up that ſame time and room which they ſhould have; if you have any thing of greater moment, which ſhould be done at that ſame time, whatever hindereth it is vanity and worſe; and therefore there is no

no cure for vanity of mind and life, till men come to know their great neceſſities, and important buſineſs which they have for all their thoughts and time, even the regard of their end and all the means, the duties of their ſpiritual and temporal Callings, and ſee that they have no time to ſpare.

II. Qu. *Is it lawful to be of a Trade which ſerveth the Humours of vain Perſons; as to make Cards, or Dice, or Stage-Playes;* or vain *Attire, as Ribbonds, Periwigs, and ſuch like?*

Anſ. 1. Theſe things are of very different Natures: Some of them, as Stage-Playes, Cards and Dice, (though Inſtances may be deviſed in which it is poſſible to uſe them lawfully) are ſo ordinarily uſed ſinfully, and ſo ſeldom well; that the Trade that maintaineth them may well be ſuppoſed to be a Trade of maintaining Sin: And, had I a Son, I had rather he begg'd his Bread, than have ſuch a Trade. But Laces, and Ribbonds, and fine Cloaths, and Feathers, and divers ſuch things, have (among ſome that they are fit for) a more ordinary lawful uſe; and therefore I cannot ſay, that ſuch Trades are ſinful. 2. But yet becauſe

cause they are of so little benefit to the Common-wealth, and so very frequently used to serve a vain and sinful Lust and Fancy: I take it to be a Sin for any one to preferr such a Trade before one that is more blameless and profitable, though the Person might get more Money by it. 3. And they that will use such a Trade without Sin, must necessarily be so careful in distinguishing of Customers, and not promiscuously sell to all who they perceive will serve their Sin by it; that it will much diminish their Gain. The Case is much like an Ale-seller's or Vintner's, which is lawful in it self, but must be used with so much distinguishing care, as I doubt few practise, lest their Gain be hindered: And therefore a *safer* Trade is much to be preferr'd, which is not a continual Temptation.

Q. 2. *May a Servant dwell with and obey such a Master, or Lady, or Mistress, as will command them to spend much of their time in Trifles and Vanities, that are but to please a proud or curious Fancy?*

Ans. 1. It must be supposed, that many times Servants, through Sloth or Education, misjudge those things to be need-

leſs or evil, which are not ſuch; and think that their Superiours ſhould command them no other labour than what they like themſelves: In this caſe their Errour will not juſtifie their Neglect. Perſons of Honour and Dignity may lawfully go much further in employing their Servants in Dreſſings, and Adornings, and Attendance, and in waſhing and rubbing Rooms, and ſuch ſmaller things, than lower Perſons, from whom it is not expected, and to whom the marks of Wealth agree not, though none muſt be inordinate.

2. In meer doubtful Caſes Servants are not the Judges of their Governour's Commands and Buſineſs; and where they are no Judges, and know no Sin, they muſt ſubmit.

3. Sometimes that which is ſinfully commanded, may be lawfully and dutifully obey'd. As it is a Sin in a ſick Man to be peeviſh and hardly pleaſed, and to command many needleſs things to a Servant in that peeviſh humor; when yet (they being lawful things to be done) the Servant may be bound to obey them. A Patient may ſinfully be humorous in his Expectations, when a Phyſitian may yet lawfully pleaſe his

his Humours for his Health. A Child may faultily cry for ſomething, when the Nurſe may without fault give him that which he cryeth for, to quiet him. All is not forbidden the Servant to do, which is forbidden the Governour to command.

4. But all that is *Sin in the Doer* muſt be forborn; and to ſerve and cheriſh the Sin of others when we may chooſe, is ſinful.

5. Therefore in ſuch Caſes, though it be lawful for a Servant to do many needleſs things (not forbidden him by God) when commanded, it is unlawful to chooſe ſuch a Service, in which he ſhall be ſo employed, to ſpend his time in Vanity, to ſatisfie a Ruler's Pride and Humour, unleſs it be in caſe of true Neceſſity, or probably to attain a greater good, which will compenſate all the Inconvenience. As if a Pirate or Tyrant command me to ſay ſome *idle Words*, or do ſome *needleſs Action*, or elſe my Friend or I ſhould be murthered; in this caſe they are not *idle*, or *needleſs*, or *unlawful*, but a *Duty*; which voluntarily chooſen, would be a Sin.

Obj. *By this you will make it a Duty to obey Papal Commands of idle Ceremonies, if*

we doubt, or if they be not things forbidden us.

Anſ. 1. God hath not left us to ſo much liberty how to worſhip him, as he hath left us about our Houſes, and Dreſſes, and common things.

2. The Pope and his Miniſters are unlawful Governours, as ſetting up an unlawful Church Policy, even a univerſal humane Eccleſiaſtical Monarchy (or Ariſtocracy, as the Conciliar Party hold) and therefore we owe them no Obedience even in lawful things, and it is a Sin to become their Subjects.

3. Doubting whether *real Sin* be *Sin*, will not make it no Sin, nor change the Law of God. Should Men be uncertain whether Rebellion, Schiſm, Fornication, Perjury or Lying be Sin, they may not therefore do it, though it were commanded them; for no one hath true Authority to command them.

4. But if really the thing be *lawful* to be done, we *muſt do it*, if commanded by ſuch as have true Authority to do it, though they miſtake and ſin in the *Reaſons*, *Ends* and *Manner* of their Command.

5. If a lawful Magiſtrate or Ruler ſinfully

fully command [Say ſuch or ſuch a needleſs word, or do ſuch a vain Action, or wear ſuch a vain Habit (not forbidden us by God) or elſe you ſhall be ſilenced, baniſhed, impriſoned] it ceaſeth to be vain in the Uſer, when it's made neceſſary to ſuch ends, though it be ſinfully commanded. But what God forbiddeth muſt never be done.

Qu. 3. *May the Huſband and Maſter bear with ſinful Vanities in his Wife and Servants, in his Houſe? Seeing he is the Ruler, is it not his Sin to tolerate them?*

Anſ. 1. It is undoubtedly his Sin to *conſent*, or not to remedy it, if he can do it by lawful means. 2. It oft falls out that not only needleſs Toyes and Vanities, but ſome downright great Sins, cannot be hindred effectually without ſo great Inconveniences and Miſchiefs, as that ſuch hindering becometh an *unlawful means*. If a Man have a Wife ſo paſſionate or unquiet, as that no means would reſtrain her Tongue or Hands, but turning her away, or uſing ſuch Violence as is unſuitable to a Conjugal Relation; he muſt patiently endure her Sin.

If he have a Wife that will fall into ſome dangerous Diſeaſe, or grow diſtra-

cted, if ſhe may not Pleaſe her Pride in Apparel, or ſinfully waſte much in vain Expences, or may not uſe an unruly Tongue to ſin; or at leaſt, if the reſtraint would coſt the Husband ſo dear, as would by unquietneſs unfit him to ſerve God in his place; in this caſe it is no ſinful Toleration to endure it: He is far from conſenting to it; he only reſtraineth not that which he cannot reſtrain: For what a Man cannot do by *lawful means*, and without doing more hurt than good, it muſt be ſaid, that he cannot *do it at all*. And ſo much as a Man may *lawfully give* to *purchaſe* his own Peace and Quietneſs, or to cure his Wife of ſuch a Diſeaſe or Diſtraction; ſo much he may lawfully ſuffer her to ſpend (though ſinfully) to prevent it, as long as he diſowneth the Sin, and would remedy it, if he could by lawful means.

Obj. *If you tell Women this, ſome will give their Huſbands no Quietneſs, and ſome will waſte their Eſtates in Sin, or vain Expences, to ſatisfie their Luſts.*

Anſ. 1. We muſt uſe no falſe Doctrine for the preventing of ſuch perſons Sin: If it be true, *ſome Men* have need to know it. 2. It's poſſible that *ſome Rates* of

of *Expence* or *Suffering*, may be *greater* than the preventing of the Wives Calamity and its Conſequents are worth; and in ſuch caſes it cannot be ſo prevented. 3. And I hope the Caſe is ſo rare, that moſt Women's Pride, Exorbitancy and Paſſion, and the Sins thence proceeding, may be reſtrained by other means, at eaſier rates.

Obj. 2. *But by this you would inferr, that Evils may alſo be tolerated in the Church, if ſo far in the Family.*

Anſ. Conſenting to any Sin, is ſin, and ſo is doing that by *promoting* or *tolerating*, which *ſignifieth Conſent*; but *not to hinder* that which we *cannot hinder by lawful means*, and without *doing greater hurt than good*, is no Conſenting, or ſinful Toleration. Papiſts that are for burning and baniſhing Diſſenters, yet confeſs this, that they muſt tolerate them, when elſe they ſhould more hurt the Church by what is done againſt them.

It is no Sin to bear with the greateſt Sin in the World which we cannot remedy, much leſs with humane common frailties, in which all mortal men muſt bear with one another, or elſe forſake all Love and Peace.

And this Objection mindeth me humbly but earneſtly (though almoſt hopeleſly) to deſire all Governours to take notice, that the Paſtoral Government of Chriſts Church (being exerciſed under him, who calleth it his Spouſe and Body) is very like the *Government of a Huſband over his Wife*, which muſt be done by *no means* inconſiſtent with *Love* and *Conjugal offices* and *Communion to the laſt*. And therefore if men muſt bear with ſo many and great offences and inconveniences, yea and ſufferings in and from a Wife for their houſhold peace and quietneſs, let them conſider whether for *Church-Peace* much evil is not to be endured when it cannot be lawfully hindered.

And if humane frailty and darkneſs be ſuch, as that few perſons living have the ſame apprehenſions of many or moſt things, and Husband and Wife about their ordinary affairs, will daily manifeſt ſuch difference of opinions and humours, as muſt be born (or they muſt bear much worſe,) let Paſtors conſider, while we agree in all things neceſſary to Salvation and the common peace, how much *diverſity of ſence*,

ſence, and conſequently of *practice*, muſt be endured in the numerous difficulties of Religion, by them that know the way of Peace: And whether they that will not bear a little, are not preparing to bear much. And perhaps if the *Roman* Clergy had not been ſo much againſt Prieſts Marriage, the experience of their Families, and what differing apprehenſions and actions muſt there be born by Conjugal Love, might have better taught them how far to bear with differing opinions and practices in Religion, inſtead of their unchriſtian, inhumane Laws and Practices, of burning, exterminating, and ruining all ſuch as their Judgments ſhall Stigmatize as Hereticks.

Qu. 4. *What are to be taken for ſinful needleſs Studies, which Scholars ſhould avoid?*

Anſ. 1. There is great cauſe to put this queſtion, conſidering how many years are this way loſt, and how little it is repented of, and how much is ſtill owned and applauded by men of greateſt reputation.

The Caſe may be reſolved by the

ſame Rules before given. 1. All Learning and Studies which are not worth the coſt and labour. 2. All that do but ſerve that vain deſire of Knowledge, which firſt tempted *Eve* to Sin. 3. Much more all that which is but to ſerve mens ſinful Pride and worldly deſigns; And it were well with many Students if their Learning (or Science falſly ſo called, ſaith *Paul*) became not more plentiful and dangerous matter of Pride and ſelf-deceit, than fine cloaths and trifles do to Women.

4. All that is worſe than vain, which keepeth out greater and neceſſary things, and turneth the mind from Holineſs and Heaven.

But the ſame Knowledge in its proper place, and uſed in due ſubordination to the greateſt things, and as a true means to the true end, is good and holy, which otherwiſe placed and uſed is doting vanity, and deluſory dreaming; as too many ungodly Students will find to their coſt when it is too late. Therefore a ſound Judgement and Holy will, by right intention of the end and true diſcerning the aptitude of means, muſt reſolve this caſe, and moſt

moſt of ſuch caſes through all our lives. Happy is he that is wiſe in things ſpiritual and of everlaſting conſequence to God, and to Salvation, though the World ſhould deride him as unlearned or a fool. And woe to him that is honoured for wit and policy, for many Languages and a rolling Tongue, for the prudence of *Achitophel*, or the Learning of *Ariſtotle*, and hath not Wiſdom to live to God, to reſiſt temptation, to eſcape damning ſin, and to ſave his Soul: It will do him no more good in Hell, that he was cryed up for a Learned, or Wiſe or Reverend man on earth, than it will do to *Dives*, (*Luk.* 16.) that he was cloathin Purple and Silk, and fared ſumptuouſly every day, and had his Portion and good things where *Lazarus* had Sorrow and Contempt. More than one of the moſt famous Schollars, have at laſt cryed out, that All Learning is Vanity, ſave the Knowledge of God in Chriſt, our duties, and our ſpiritual and endleſs benefits and hopes.

I have told you of many evils that come by the preference of unneceſſary or leſs

leſs neceſſary things, but one remaineth to be noted, which the Text expreſſeth in *Martha's* inſtance: while ſhe is over-careful and troubled about many things, which were then leſs neceſſary, ſhe thinks her Siſter ſhould have been of the ſame mind, and done as ſhe did, and grudgeth at her and accuſeth her to Chriſt, as if *Mary's* work had been leſs neceſſary than hers: which ſheweth us,

Obſerv. *That they that chooſe unneceſſary or leſs neceſſary employments, are apt to account Religious exerciſes leſs neceſſary, and to cenſure thoſe that chooſe them.*

The wrong cenſuring of *Mary's* choice and work, was as much of *Martha's* fault as her own worſt choice and needleſs trouble. Thoſe that ſin *againſt Knowledge*, and *confeſs* that they do ill, are often deſirous that their Children and Friends ſhould do better: But they that think their *Sin* is their *Duty*, will cenſure thoſe that ſin not with them, as if it were Sin to fear Sin and avoid it. And no wonder: For, 1. That which is *true to one*, is true

true to *another*; and that which is *beſt to one*, as a *common duty*, is *beſt to another*: and it is natural to us to deſire that our *Friends* ſhould know what we *know*, and *chooſe* that common good which we *chooſe*, and avoid the errour, Sin and Miſery which we avoid: Our *Love* to *Truth* and goodneſs will make us deſire that they may be common: And our *Love* to *our Friends* will make us deſire that *they* may be *happy* by chooſing what is *beſt*: And the *Love of our ſelves* maketh men deſire that others may be of *their Mind* and *way*: As God firſt *loveth himſelf*, and next that which is *moſt like himſelf*, ſo naturally doth a ſelfiſh man: Though a *holy man* as *ſuch* firſt loveth *God*, and then that which is *likeſt God*; yet when he erreth, he thinketh that to be *like God* which is *not*. And then even the *Love of God* alſo will be abuſed to the promoting of errour, and the angry cenſuring of Truth and Duty. No doubt but *Martha*'s *Love to Chriſt* himſelf was abuſed by her errour, to cenſure her Siſter that did not ſerve him in the way that ſhe thought then moſt neceſſary.

2. And

2. And when ſeveral things are *contrary* or *inconſiſtent*, the over valuing of the *one*, muſt needs cauſe the under-valuing and rejecting of the *other*; the weighing down of one end of the ballance will lift up the other: As all men that are *earthly minded* are ſo much the leſs *ſpiritual and heavenly*, and he that loveth the world hath the *leſs* love to God, ſo they that over-value *unneceſſary* things, will naturally grow into a greater diſeſteem of things truly *neceſſary*; contrary things cannot be both at once *preferred* (in the ſame reſpect) when *unneceſſary* things ſeem *neceſſary*, inconſiſtent *neceſſary* things will ſeem *unneceſſary*.

All this we ſee verified conſtantly in our *experience*, in mens judging both for *themſelves* and *others*.

1. Mark any that grow more in loving and caring for *Unneceſſary*, *Worldly*, *Fleſhly things*, and you ſhall find that they grow more indifferent to *Prayer*, and to all holy exerciſes that employ the mind; a *little* of this will ſerve their turns: Mark them that over-mind their *Ornaments*, their *Conveniencies*, their *Appetites* or their *Worldly gain*, and you ſhall

ſhall ſee how heartleſs and dead they grow towards God, and Holineſs, and Heaven; when ſhadows ſeem ſubſtances, the ſubſtance goeth but for a ſhadow: A little of God will ſerve them, when a little of the World will not ſerve them; and ſpiritual things loſe all their ſweetneſs, when fleſhly Pleaſures and Hopes grow too ſweet.

2. And you ſhall ſee that ſuch Perſons do judge accordingly of others: Their love of Vanity maketh ſerious Religion ſeem a vanity to them: When they are over eager for the Fleſh or World, they judge Gods Servants to be over earneſt in Religion; when we wonder what they can find in an empty world to take up all their thoughts and hearts, their talk, labour and time, they wonder what we find in Religion to take up ours; as we ſay to them, what needs all this adoe for Vanity? cannot you have Food and a Grave without this over-much care aud trouble? ſo they ſay to us, [*What needs all this adoe in Religion, cannot a man be ſaved without ſo much violence and ſtir? is God ſo ill natured that no leſs will pleaſe him?* Thus God muſt be thought to be like them,

them, *Pſal.* 50. and to leave his holineſs when they leave theirs, (or never had it) and to grow indifferent and reconcileable to ſin when once they love it.

And when ſerious Godlineſs is thus rejected by themſelves, it firſt ſeemeth in others to be but a *needleſs honeſt Superſtition*, the effect of a weak Judgment, and a timerous and trembling heart; and afterward they grow on to call it *fooliſhneſs*, and entitle it as Chriſt did *Martha's Caſe*, *A care and trouble about many unneceſſary things*: And from thence many grow to think it *evil*; and from thence to think it the *moſt inſufferable evil*, and to take ſerious Conſcience of our duty to God to be the *greateſt rebel* againſt *Kings*, and the greateſt *troubler* of the *Land*, the greateſt *Schiſmatick*, and the moſt dangerous *Enemy*, and moſt intollerable *Plague*; and ſo they proceed to helliſh *malignity* and cruel Perſecution: This is the natural Progreſs of over-valuing and over-minding *needleſs* things.

3. And alas, not only the hiſtory of thirteen hundred years, but the notice of our own age hath told us, that even in the Churches the *ſame Cauſe* hath produced the *ſame Effect*, when many

needleſs

needleſs and *troubleſome* things are *over-valued* and thought *neceſſary*; *Mary* is accuſed, and her hearing ſo much *Preaching*, is taken for the effect of Idleneſs or itching Ears: In the Church of *Rome* where things firſt called *indifferent* have been preferred, *true Knowledge*, *explicite Faith*, *ſpiritual Worſhip*, and a *holy Life*, are taken to be neceſſary only to *ſome few Votaries*, or *Saints* that are to be Canonized as wonders, and not to all that will be ſaved; and a maſs of Ceremonies hath ſhut out moſtly ſerious Preaching, Praying and Holy Living; their Tree beareth ſometimes only Leaves, and at other times the Pricks of Thorns and Thiſtles. Images pretended to be for the honour of departed Saints, are cheriſhed where Saints and ſanctity are hated; as their Forefathers the *Phariſees*, Mat. 23. *They build the Sepulchers of the Prophets and righteous men*, and condemn thoſe that murthered them, and keep *holy-dayes* in honour of them, and go on implacably to *kill thoſe that imitate them*, and to do as their Forefathers did that Perſecuted them. *Ceremony* is become the *Subſtance* of too many mens Religion, and an

Image

Image and *Shadow* of Faith and Godlineſs, Juſtice and Charity hath taken place of *Life and Subſtance*. Too many Churches are filled with Statues and Carkaſſes inſtead of real Saints: The Shell which is but to keep the Kernel, is valued in its ſtead, and the Kernel caſt away inſtead of the Shell. The *Letter* which is for the *ſignification* of the *ſence*, is firſt taken up as *enough without it*, and then turned as an *enemy againſt it*; and the oft repeated names of *Jeſus*, and *Mary*, and *Saints* are uſed, firſt inſtead of holy love to Jeſus and Saints, and then to cheriſh a malignant murderous hatred of them that are Saints indeed within their reach. It was St. *Dominick* and ſuch other of their holy men, that promoted the murder of real Saints, even of many thouſands, if not hundred thouſands; Do but call them *Hereticks*, *Waldenſes*, *Albigenſes*, *Lutherans*, *Zuinglians*, *Calviniſts*, *Hugonots*, *Bigots*, *Lollards*, *Whigs*, *Puritans*, and then Conſcience is as looſe and free to hate, revile, impriſon, ſilence or murder them, as if they were ſo many Robbers or Rebels, or as bad as their Accuſers and Perſecutors feign them.

them. *Paul* doth foretell that in the *last daies* ſome ſhall be *haters of thoſe that are good*, and διάβολοι, *Devils*, which we tranſlate *falſe Accuſers*, and yet have a form of Godlineſs, while they deny the Power. *Diabolism* begins in *falſe Accuſation*, and proceedeth to the cruelleſt Perſecution; what on earth can be liker a Devil, than firſt to Print ſuch horrid lies of the Servants of Chriſt, as they have done of *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Bucer*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, and the reformed Churches, and then to torture and burn ſuch as Hereticks, and to make it a Law and part of their Religion to compell Princes to do the like in all generations to come, and even to burn the *Bones* of the *Dead*, as they did by *Bucer*, *Phagius* and *Wickliff*; yea, to murder them by thouſands, as in *France*, and by hundred thouſands, as in *Ireland*; and all this began with the overvaluing *unneceſſary things*, worldly Pomp, and Power, and Wealth, and Pleaſure, and Images, Ceremonies and Formalites? What dreadful work was made about Images, againſt the Eaſtern Emperours! how many Councils of Biſhops were the Authors of Schiſm and Rebellion for them! and at laſt

for

for them did the Pope rebelliouſly caſt off his Sovereign, and cut off the Weſtern Empire from him, and give it (as if it had been his own) to the *French*: To this day, do but ſpeak againſt their *deified Wafer*, or their Maſs of Ceremonies, or their adoring Images, or their falſe Doctrine, or their Papal or Prelatical Tyranny and Uſurpation, and you preſently deſerve to be painted with the Picture of Devils, and after the torment of the Inquiſition to be Curſed from Chriſt, and Burned to Aſhes; and all this as for Chriſt, the Church and Faith.

And the *German Interim* told the World whither the overvaluing of things called *Indifferent* doth tend, when the Churches were deſerted, the Miniſters ſilenced and perſecuted, and ſadly divided among themſelves, and the Reformation almoſt overthrown; and all becauſe the Paſtors refuſed to conform to a Book compiled by the Emperour's Command, by a few ſelf-conceited Biſhops, pretending to be moderate Reconcilers, obtruding divers of the *Romiſh* Formalities as the means of the Peace and Concord of the Churches. It would grieve ones Heart to read what Con-

Confusions this imposed Book, called the *Interim*, did cause.

But alas, *they* are not the only Instances of the calamitous Effects of the over-valuing and obtruding unnecessary things. As the *Ruines of Troy* long told Spectators what a War for one *Helena*, a beautiful Whore did cost that part of the World, (which became the Subjects of the famous Poems of divers Ages;) even so the Ruines of the *Eastern* Churches, sometime the most great and famous in the World, and now the Habitation of Owls and Serpents, deluded *Mahometans*, with some ignorant, sad, oppressed Christians, proclaim to all that read, hear, or see them, what are the fruits of striving about unnecessary things, even about worldly Pre-eminence and Wealth; which Patriark should be greatest, and which Bishop should sit highest, and go first, and have his Will, and pass for the most Orthodox, or have most Followers; and about ambiguous words, who it was that spake wiselyest, and who should make the words of other Mens Creeds and Professions; (for the Trade of making *Liturgies* which *whole Nations* or *Provinces* must be confined to, was not set up till after

after that of *making Creeds:*) In a word, *Church-Wars*; 1. About the *Juriſdiction of Prelates*; eſpecially, whether *Rome* or *Conſtantinople* ſhould be the Chief; 2. And about *hard* and *doubtful words*; 3. And about *Images* and *Ceremonies*; have laid *Eaſt* and *Weſt* in the Condition of Apoſtaſie, Deſolation, Shame and Slavery, in which with Amazement we ſee them at this day.

And what are all the religious Wars, Murthers and Cruelties exerciſed for, by the Papal Party, but that *one Prelate* and *his Confederates* may be the *Maſters* of all the *Chriſtian World*, and may have *their Wills* in all *religious* Matters directly, and in all *Civil Matters in order to the Religious*; and that all their *Laws* may be *obeyed*, their *Formalities uſed*, and their *Words believed?* Killing, burning, tormenting, confounding, ſeem not too dear to accompliſh this. *Behold how great a matter a little Fire kindleth!* Who would think, that never before ſaw it, that a little Gunpowder ſhould blow up Houſes, as it doth? And who would have thought that ſo many Churches, Kingdoms, Lives and Souls ſhould have been blown up, or ruined, as they have been, for the un-

unneceſſary Domination, Wealth, Formalities and Ceremonies of the Clergy.

I have often, too often heard *Preachers themſelves*, inſtead of a *Sermon*, pour out Scorns againſt thoſe that preached and lived more ſeriouſly, ſtrictly and holily than themſelves: And I have too oft heard the *Common Rabble* revile them that were moſt careful and diligent for Salvation, as a company of Preciſians, Puritans and Hypocrites: And I have thought with my ſelf; *Have theſe Men found better and greater things to lay out their own Care, Time and Labour for?* And alas, I perceived that inſtead of God, and Chriſt, and Holineſs, and Heaven, they had nothing to take them up, but Vanity and Vexation; their Bellies, and their Purſes, and their Walls, and their Titles, and their Pride, and Luſt, and ſelfiſh Wills; and are theſe more neceſſary than *Mary's Choice?* Mark what thoſe Perſons are *ſaying* and *doing* every day, who think *Serious Godlineſs* to be *over-doing*; and you ſhall ſee, that inſtead of it, ſome are doing *nothing*, and ſome worſe than *nothing*; waſting their ſhort time, deceiving and deſtroying themſelves and others. And

And indeed it is not poſſible that any one that is a ſerious Chriſtian himſelf, and hath tryed truly a holy Life, ſhould think it needleſs, or make it a matter of Reproach to others. But we grant, that particular Duties may be miſplaced, and Prudence is neceſſary to know their time, and length, and manner; and it's poſſible, both that a *Mary* may ſometime here imprudently over-do, and that a *Martha* may by miſtake be quarrelſome, and accuſe the Innocent, that yet is not againſt ſerious Piety it ſelf. Therefore I think meet to annex theſe two Cautions to the Hearers in this Caſe.

I. Do not preſently take your ſelves to be truly godly, becauſe ſome others accuſe you of over-doing, or of being religious over-much. Every one is not a Saint that is derided for Sanctity; every one doth not ſincerely preach, hear, pray, or practiſe, that is derided for theſe things: If you have no better Evidence of Grace, than that ſome call you Puritans, Preciſians, or ſuch like, it will be an inſufficient Evidence. 1. *Bad Men* will deride thoſe that ſeem holy, though they are not ſo. 2. And *good Men* in their faulty weakneſs, may

mis-

misjudge of the Circumstances of your Duty, and *unjustly blame you*, and yet you may not be sincere in the main. 3. And you *may actually mistake* in *Circumstances* your selves, and *deserve* the *blame* that is cast upon you. The *Pharisees* were over-strict for the Sabbath, and in avoiding Publicans and Sinners, and thought Christ too loose: *Judas* pretendeth more Charity to the Poor than Christ had. That is not rightest which seemeth strictest, but that which is most agreeable to the Law of God. Though some misapply *Solomon*'s words, *Eccles.* 7. 16. *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy self over-wise*; as if it had been written against serious diligent Obedience to God, and true proper *Righteousness* and *Wisdom*; yet we must know, that it was written by the Holy Ghost, and not in vain. A Pharisaical Superstitious sort of Religion, and Observation of vain Traditions, and a *zealous Strictness* which God never *commanded*, is a *Righteousness* equivocally so called, and it is *over-much*: Such is much of the Popish Righteousness, and such is the affected Austerity of several Sects, old and new. *Touch not*, *Taste not*, *Han-*

dle not, are oft a humane counterfeit *Righteouſneſs*, which God doth neither require, nor accept. As God liketh not a *Popiſh Charity*, that *killeth* or *tormenteth* Men in *love to God* and *Religion*; ſo neither doth he like thoſe *Superſtitious Auſterities* which deſtroy our own *Bodies*, and diſable us from chearful Thankfulneſs and Obedience; which maketh *Solomon* ſay, *Why ſhouldſt thou be deſolate*, (*or deſtroy thy ſelf?*) That is good which is fitted to do good. All Grace and Duty is for Edification.

II. And as every one is not *truly Godly* who is *derided* as *Godly* by the prophane, or blamed for ſome ſuperſtitious ſtrictneſs, ſo you muſt not take *every one for malignant or ungodly, who* ſpeaketh againſt *ſuch ſtrictneſs*, as either is *real ſuperſtition*, or ſeemeth ſo or worſe to him.

For, 1. If you are *guilty* of ſuperſtition, it is a friendly office to ſhew you your miſtake: 2. And if you are in *the right*, and another that is in the wrong *miſaccuſeth* you, in many Caſes his errour may ſtand with Love to *Truth and Holineſs* in the main: Every one is not ungodly who *miſreproach* us

us with the *Anabaptiſts* for *Baptizing Infants*: Or with the *Antinomians* as ſetting up the *abrogated Law*; and ſo of many others. As men differ in Judgment about Gods Law, they will accuſe each others differing Practice: But *oppoſing Serious Godlineſs* as *ſuch*, is another thing.

And indeed it is uſual with malignant enemies of a holy Life, to make themſelves a *Religion* of *Formalities*, and *Imagery and ſhadows*, to quiet their Conſciences while they reſiſt the Truth, that it may not ſeem to be an act of *impiety and malignity* which they do, but an oppoſition to the *faults* of others.

But the Uſe which you ſhould make of this Leſſon, is this: Take heed leſt *you* be tempted to an over-valuing of any unneceſſary or leſs needful things, whether it be Wealth, and Honour and Fleſhly Intereſt; or elſe any formalities, or things indifferent about Religion, leſt before you are aware (as Imagery ſtole away the Hearts of the old Idolaters from God, ſo) theſe ſhould ſecretly conſume your holy zeal, and turn your Hearts from the Life

and ſerious exerciſe of Religion, and worſhipping God in *Spirit and Truth*; and afterwards draw you to condemn that zeal and diligence in others which you want your ſelves. We have Bodies as well as Souls, and muſt have a juſt regard to bodily neceſſaries; and a care that our Bodies do their duty: But let the Body and it's Intereſt keep their place: Remember how far it is below the Soul, and uſe it, and all it's intereſts accordingly. The *leaſt* things that are *good* are not to be *deſpiſed:* But alas what work is made by *preferring little things!* The *Traditions* of their Fathers, their Tithing *Mint and Anniſe*, their *Waſhings*, their *building the Sepulchers of the Prophets*, their Domination, Pomp and Ceremonies, did paſs with the *Phariſees* inſtead of the *great things of the Law*, and *Sacrifice* went before *Mercy*, Truth and Judgment; yea and became a Cloak for devouring Widows houſes, and for Perſecuting and Silencing the Preachers of the Goſpel, and for Slandering and Murdering Chriſt himſelf.

What Ruins this hath made in Souls, Churches and Kingdoms, I have alrea-

already told you: Know therefore wherein Gods *Kingdom doth conſiſt*, Rom. 14. 17, 18. And *what* and *whom* God bindeth you to *approve*, and *learn* what this *meaneth*, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, that you may not deceive your ſelves or condemn the guiltleſs. Even *Martha* will murmur at her dear Siſter and accuſe her, if ſhe be her ſelf but tainted with this ill diſeaſe.

But whoſe part doth Chriſt take, and which of them doth he juſtifie? The Defendant *Mary*, and that 1. With a *Compaſſionate reproof of Martha*, 2. With the *Reaſon of Mary's Juſtification*, 3. And with a *Sentence of Bleſſing added to her defence*: Whence we learn,

Doct. 2. *That when wiſer Chriſtians and their better Choice and work, are accuſed by them that preferred leſs needful things, Chriſt will be the Advocate and Judge, and will defend and juſtifie the wrongfully accuſed.* He will in this Caſe take the accuſed's part.

Martha accuſeth her Siſter to Chriſt, ſhe expecteth that he ſhould blame her as neglecting her duty, and leaving all the trouble and care on *Martha:* But Chriſt doth not anſwer her Expectation, but juſtifieth the Wiſe and Innocent.

Reaſ. 1. For it is his Office to be both the Advocate and the Judge: And he will do it in perfection, without errour or injuſtice. He well knoweth who is in the right, and none can deceive him by falſe Accuſations or falſe Witneſſes.

2. He is ſo nearly related and deeply obliged to defend the Innocent or Juſt, that he will never fail them. They are his Members, and his Love engageth him: He ſpared not his *Life* and *Blood* for them, and will he not *ſpeak* for them? They are his *purchaſe*, and *intereſt*, his peculiar redeemed ones, and will he forſake *his Intereſt*, and *his Own*?

3. Indeed in *plain Juſtice* he is *bound* to juſtifie them againſt ſuch injurious Accuſations: For it is *he* that *commandeth*

eth them to do what they are accuſed of: It is for *obeying him*: If it were a *fault*, it would be his that bid them do it. Nay how much hath he done to bring his Servants to that Holy Choice and Faithful Duty, which in the world they are commonly accuſed for! Alas we were not forward to it of our ſelves. It was *not we* that made the *Law*, which ſo ſtrictly forbiddeth Sin, and commandeth Duty: The Bible is not of our making: It is *not we* that made the Law, to *Love God with all our Heart, and Soul, and might, and our Neighbour as our ſelves; not to take his Name in Vain, to worſhip God in Spirit and in Truth*, &c. And it was a higher cauſe than our own power, which taught us and inclined our Hearts to obey theſe: Many a Meſſage did Chriſt ſend us, by his Bible, Miniſters and Spirit, before we were heartily drawn to yield: Many a daies Patience did he uſe, and many a threatning to drive us to it, and many a Mercy and Promiſe to draw us, and many a Book and Teacher to Inſtruct us, yea and many an Affliction to Correct us; And will he not juſtifie us for that which

he ſo earneſtly commandeth us, and with ſo much ado doth bring us to obey? Did he come into the world, and live and dye, to ſave his People from their Sins, and purifie to himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works, (*Tit.* 2. 14.) and will he forſake them when they are accuſed for obeying him? Where ſhall we meet with a *man* of any common honeſty, that would do thus by his pooreſt Servant? And ſhall not the Judge of all the Earth do righteouſly. For our parts, if we are accuſed for Serious Piety, or any duty which Chriſt commandeth us, it is his command that was our reaſon and obligation, and which we have to alledge for our defence. If that have not *Authority* and *Truth* enough to juſtifie us, we have no other Juſtification. Indeed Chriſt ſhould forſake himſelf if he thus deſerted us: He ſhould take the blame upon his own Laws, yea and on all the works of his Grace and Spirit, and all that he hath done to bring us to that which the world and our fleſh was ſo much againſt.

4. He defendeth his Diſciples againſt the

the *Phariſees* Accuſations on Earth, and will he afterward forſake them?

5. He hath appointed the great day to judge the World in Righteouſneſs, even the ſecrets of men, and to bring all things open into the manifeſting light, even all Truth and Falſhood, and all the hidden works of Darkneſs: Therefore undoubtedly all Truth, all Righteouſneſs, and all that is of God, ſhall be fully Juſtified, and Gods Truth in all, when falſe Accuſers ſhall be all found Lyars.

Uſe. This being then ſo plain and ſure, I would commend the Conſideration of it to ſeveral Sorts, and in ſeveral Inſtances. I. To the Accuſers of the Godly for their Duty to God. II. To the Accuſed. III. To thoſe that are yet in doubt what Cauſe to chooſe.

I. The unjuſt Accuſers of Juſt Men are of divers degrees or ſorts.

1. Some there be that only accuſe

them in *their Thoughts*, and take them to be guilty when they are not.

2. Others go further, and too *eaſily believe falſe Reports* from others; and then think that they are allowed to tell what they have heard, and ſo to vend ſuch falſe Reports. And if they can but ſay, either that it was a *great* Man, or a *Learned* Man, or a *Miniſter*, or a *Religious* Man that ſaid it, they think that their Calumny or Back-biting is no Sin: But much more, if *many* ſuch report it; and yet more, if they heard none contradict it.

3. Others there be, that becauſe it ſerveth their Intereſt or Deſign, or *pleaſeth* their malignant Minds, do make it part of *their buſineſs* purpoſely to carry about ſuch Reports, and perſwade as many as they can to believe them, and plead down thoſe that contradict them.

4. Others go further, and are the firſt Deviſers, or the malicious Increaſers of the ſlanderous Reports themſelves; not only the Spreaders or Carryers, but the Fathers of the Lies which they ſend about by others.

5. Yet ſome go further, and ſtudi-

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ouſly and maliciouſly publiſh them in Pulpits, or in Print, to draw the World and Poſterity to believe them; yea and this as for God, and as for the Church and Truth; as if it were but the detecting of Hereſies or Lies, or dangerous Faults or Practices of others.

6. And yet further, ſome in moſt Ages and Countries, in Offices and places of Judicature, who ſhould be the Pillars of Juſtice; do paſs falſe Sentences againſt the Juſt, and pronounce them *guilty*, and perſecute and oppreſs them by their unrighteous Puniſhments.

7. And yet worſe; ſome ſlander not only the Perſons, but the Cauſe of Truth, Piety, and Righteouſneſs it ſelf, and make falſe *Laws* and *Canons*, calling good evil, and decreeing the common ſlandering of the Truth, and the puniſhing of the Innocent, becauſe they will not break the *Laws* of God, and pleaſe proud miſtaking Men before him.

To all theſe Sorts of Accuſers of the Juſt, I would give (would they hear me) this following Advice.

1. I adviſe you to ſtay, and think well of the matter; and be ſure that you have throughly tryed it, before you

you venture to paſs your Judgment. It is not ſo ſmall a matter as you think to wrong the Juſt, and ſay, I was miſtaken. And eſpecially will you be firſt ſure what ſide Chriſt will take, and whether he will be of the Accuſer's mind.

And Chriſt hath ſo fully told us his mind already in his Word, that we may certainly foreknow what Judgment he will paſs.

1. Do you accuſe Men for *pretending to the Spirit, and to be holy?* Why Chriſt hath ſaid, that, *Except a man be born of Water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Joh. 3. 6. And, *Without Holineſs none ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. And, *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, the ſame is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9.

2. Do you accuſe godly Men for *Singularity*, and *for differing from* others in *their Religious Diligence and Zeal?* If they differ from the *Common Faith of Chriſtians*, or ſingle themſelves from the *Communion of Saints*, or from the Love and Concord of Believers; Chriſt will not juſtifie them in this: For he hath ſaid; *A man that is an Heretick after the firſt and ſecond Admonition, avoid*, Tit. 3. 10. And,

10. And, *By this ſhall all men know that you are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one to another*, Joh. 13. 34, 35. And, *Mark thoſe that cauſe Diviſions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them*, Rom. 16. 17.

But if it be differing from Unbelievers, or ungodly Men, or formal Hypocrites, by a holy Reſolution to live wholly to God, and obey his Laws, whoever be againſt it; if this be the *Singularity* you mean, Chriſt is engaged to bear them out: For it is he that hath commanded this, and ſaid; *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*, Joh. 15. 14. *If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my Love*, v. 10. *Except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 20. *Mat.* 5. 47. *What do you more than others? He purifieth to himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good works, Tit.* 2. 14. *Lot* differed from *Sodom*, and *Noah* differed from all the old World. The wiſe differ from the fooliſh, and the righteous from the wicked; or elſe there would not be hereafter ſo great a difference as of Heaven

and

and Hell. What is a Phyſician good for, if he make not his Patients to differ from the ſick? And what came Chriſt to do, or how is he a Saviour, if he make not his Diſciples differ from the ungodly World? Even a Philoſopher would not ſet up a School, but to make his Scholars to differ from the unlearned.

3. Is it for ſo much *Preaching and Hearing*, that you accuſe Men? It is poſſible indeed to do a Duty *unſeaſonably*, and to over-do in one thing, when it cauſeth the Omiſſion of other Duties. But certainly Chriſt that ſo ſtrictly commandeth his Miniſters to Preach, and as *they love him, to feed his Flock*, will juſtifie them for ſo doing. *How ſhall they believe without a Preacher? and how ſhall they preach unleſs they are ſent?* Rom. 10. And he that ſaid, *He that heareth you, heareth me*, and that here juſtifieth *Mary*'s Hearing, will juſtifie all others in the like caſe: For he hath bid us (by *Solomon*) to *get Wiſdom as the principal thing*, Prov. 4. 5, 7. *To incline the Ear, and apply the Heart to it; to cry after Knowledge, and lift up the voice for Underſtanding; to ſeek her as Silver, and ſearch for her as for hidden Treaſure.*

Prov.

Prov. 22. 3, 4. *Hear Inſtruction, and be wiſe, and refuſe it not. Bleſſed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at the Poſts of my Doors. For whoſo findeth me findeth Life, and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord*; Prov. 8. 33, 34, 35, 36.

4. Is it for *much Praying* that you accuſe Men? Why Chriſt bid his Diſciples *Pray alwayes, and not faint*, Luk. 18. 1, 2. And, *Pray continually*, 1 Theſ. 5. 17.

5. Is it for ſo much a-do in their Families, in the Religious Education of their Children, and reading the Scriptures, that you accuſe men? Why it is God that hath ſaid, *Deut.* 6. 7, 8, 9, 10. and *Deut.* 11. 18, 19, 20. *Theſe Words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thy Heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thy Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lyeſt down, and when thou riſeſt up*, &c. An Angel was ſent from Heaven unto *Cornelius* when he was faſting and praying in his Houſe, to ſignifie Gods acceptance, and tell him further how to be ſaved. *Daniel* would rather be caſt to Lyons,

Lyons, than forbear Praying in his Houſe for certain dayes, when the King and Laws forbad him. You may eaſily know then which ſide Chriſt will take.

6. Is it for *ſcrupling things which others ſcruple not*, and *taking that for ſin, which others ſay is none*, and ſo *not doing as others do*, that you accuſe Men?

If they miſtake, and think that to be Sin which is not; Chriſt will juſtifie their deſire to pleaſe him, and their fear of ſinning, but he will not juſtifie their miſtake. But if it be *Sin indeed*, whatever Men call it, he will juſtifie our avoiding and abhorring it. He that dyed for Sin, would not have us love it, nor run into the conſuming fire from which he came to ſave us: *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* The Accuſer may call it *Folly*, and *preciſe Scrupuloſity*; But God ſaith to Man; *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil is underſtanding*, Job 28. 28. If we ſin with others, we muſt ſuffer with them.

7. But perhaps it is for not keeping their Faith and Religion to themſelves, but making ſo much a-do to propa-

gate

gate them, that you accuſe Men.

Indeed *Paul*, ſpeaking of the knowledge and *belief of the Lawfulneſs of lawful unneceſſary things*, ſaith, *Haſt thou Faith? have it to thy ſelf before God*; Rom. 14. 21. That is, enjoy thy own Knowledge and Liberty, but uſe it not ſo as to tempt and ruine others. But ſurely it is Chriſt that hath ſaid; *Ye are the Lights of the World*, that muſt not *be put under a Buſhel*, *Mat.* 5. And, *He that gathereth not with us, ſcattereth abroad*, Mat. 12. 30. And, *Whoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs before my Father*, &c. Mat. 10. 32. And, *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation*, Rom. 10. 10. We muſt love our Neighbours as our ſelves, and therefore deſire and ſeek their Salvation: *He that ſeeth his Brother have need*, (for his Body) *and ſhutteth up the Bowels of his Compaſſion from him*; *how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* much leſs if he have no pity for Souls. While we have opportunity, we muſt do good to *all men*, Gal. 6. 10. The ſlothful Servant that hid his Talent, is condemned to utter darkneſs, *Mat.* 25. What do we

we in the World but to receive good, and do good? And how little Goodneſs is in that which tendeth not to men's Salvation? What are we made, redeemed, and preſerved for, but to ſerve God, and ſeek the good of our ſelves and others? You accuſe not men for giving *Money* to the poor and needy; and is not Holineſs much better? If *Money* be better than *Grace*, not only *Simon Magus* was excuſable, but *Cæſar* might be a greater Benefactor than Chriſt. Do you believe a Heaven, and do you accuſe men for ſeeking to help men to attain it. Unthankful miſerable Sinners, that accuſe men for endeavouring to ſave them from Sin and endleſs Miſery! were they drowning, they would not accuſe men for labouring to ſave their Lives. None but mad men ſtrive againſt thoſe that would heal or help them: But it is here no wonder, when the Saviour of the World was as madly and unthankfully uſed by ſuch Sinners: How can we expect that he will accept our help, who deſpiſeth or refuſeth Gods?

8. But perhaps it is their Zeal and Earneſtneſs in Religion that you accuſe; and think that they ſhould be, as you call

call it, more moderate; that is, indifferent and cold.

Indeed imprudent passionate Rashness, and erroneous Zeal, and factious Violence, which is more for Self-Interest and Self-Conceit, than for the Truth and Cause of Christ, is a thing which he will never justifie: If *James* and *John* have such a feaverish Zeal, he will tell them, *You know not what manner of Spirit ye are of:* Where an envious, striving, masterly Zeal is, he tells them it is not from above, but the wisdom which it pretendeth to is earthly, sensual and deviliſh, tending to Confusion and every evil work. Christ is no Patron of Popish, Tyrannical, Persecuting, Destroying, Hurtful Zeal; but surely he will justifie the Zeal of Love, and of good Works: Not zealous slandering, railing, and false censuring; but zealous Preaching, Praying, and Praising God, and a zealous Diligence in all that he commandeth, and a zealous care to mortifie fleshly Lusts, and avoid Sin, and escape Damnation, and to glorifie God. It is a base Contempt, and dishonouring of God, and Christ, and Holiness, and Heaven,

ven; to think or ſpeak of them, or ſeek them, with a cold indifferency, as if they were but common needleſs things!

How eagerly do worldlings ſeek the world, and proud men ſtrive to climb into ſome Honour, before they fall into the Grave and Hell! How violently do many earthly Rulers ſtrive to enlarge their Dominions and have their Wills, though by the ruine of Countreys, and the blood of many thouſand Innocents! How hot are all theſe worldly men, (even Popes and Prelates, that ſay they believe a better World) againſt all how wiſe and holy ſoever, that are againſt their worldly Intereſt! How fervently did they cry againſt Chriſt himſelf, *Away with him, Cruciſie him!* How furiouſly did they *gnaſh their Teeth* at *Stephen*, and ſtone him! and *cryed out againſt* Paul, *Away with ſuch a fellow from the Earth, it is not fit that he ſhould live*! The Devil is *earneſt* to deſtroy us: The zeal of Infidels, Papiſts and Church-Tyrants is burning hot, and no reaſon, no worth or innocency of the juſt, will ſerve to quench it. And is it only Gods ſervice and our Salva-

Salvation, that must be coldly managed and sought? Is it only that which we are born for, and live for, that must be thrust behind the door, or done as if we did it not? Is it Heaven and Hell that must be jested with? and Souls that must be ventured for a little wealth or lust, or our endless hope cast away for nothing? Idols that have eyes and see not, deserve no better service than the Hypocrites imagery, and stage Religion: But do you think the God of Love and Glory can be loved, honoured or obeyed too much? None but the Atheistical fool can think so! How quickly, how certainly will you all wish, that God and your Salvation had been loved and sought with all your Hearts, and Strength, and Time, and that he that is All had had your All, and that you had been as Holy as the holyest of Men! O Hypocrites, that daily pray that *Gods Name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his will done on Earth as it is done in Heaven*; and yet accuse those as doing too much, that alas fall far short of the lowest of all the heavenly inhabitants!

9. But

9. But *perhaps they are accuſed for not ſerving God juſt as men command them, and not being of the Religion of thoſe that are uppermoſt.*

This hath indeed been the common accuſation. But 1. God is uppermoſt, and will be: Therefore they are reſolved to be as near as they can of his mind that is uppermoſt, and will prevail.

2. Chriſt went againſt the Rulers of his time: and commanded his Apoſtles ſo to do, and ſo did they, and ſo did the Church for three hundred years, and in much of the World ever ſince.

3. Muſt we have as many Religions as Princes have? And muſt we change our Religion as oft as we change our Countrey? Muſt a man be a *Heathen* under *Heathens*, and a *Mahometan* under *Turks* and *Perſians*? and a *Papiſt* under *Papiſts*, and a *Socinian* under *Socinians*? and ſo on. If not, how ſhall we know which Princes Religion it is that we muſt be of, and which we muſt refuſe, but by the Word of God, which we muſt ourſelves diſcern, (uſing the beſt helps of Teachers that we

we can get?) We thank God that we have Rulers that ſo far own Truth and Righteouſneſs as they do; but even the Apoſtle ſaith, They were not *Lords, nor had Dominion over their Faith, but were their Helpers*, 2 Cor. 1. 24. 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. As *Stewards of the myſteries of God.*

4. Why do you honour the *Martyrs*, and keep Holy-daies in remembrance of their ſufferings, who *dyed* rather than they would *obey man againſt God*, if you think we muſt alwaies be of the Rulers Religion? Did the three Witneſſes ſo? *Dan.* 3. or *Daniel* himſelf? *c.* 6. The common caſe is much like *Daniels*, Dan. 6. 5. [*We ſhall not find any occaſion againſt this Daniel, except we find it againſt him concerning the Law of his God*]; Which they did, for Praying when the Law forbad him. They could find no fault with Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but for not obſerving their Traditions, and for worſhipping God contrary to the Law, and *doing contrary to the decrees of Cæſar*, Act. 18. 13. & 17. 5. Mat. 15. Gods Law is *perfect*: Mens are not ſo: Though we cannot our ſelves *attain perfection* in underſtanding or practice

ctice, yet we will chooſe and ſet before us a *perfect Rule*, even the perfect Law of the perfect Ruler of the World. If we muſt be all of the Princes or States Religion, where one Countrey hath the true Religion, many will have a falſe one: And when we are right in one point, we may be wrong in another, our Copy being ſo.

10. *But perhaps it is Errour, Sin, Sedition, Sects, Schiſm, Scandal, that you accuſe Men of:* If that be it, if you do it truly, and do not ſlander them; certainly Chriſt will not juſtifie them in theſe.

1. If you accuſe them falſly, he will juſtifie them.

2. If they have ſinned, and truly believe, and repent, and amend, he will pardon them through his meritorious Righteouſneſs and Sacrifice, and will make them and pronounce them juſt.

3. And he will juſtifie in them all that is his own and good, notwithſtanding their pardonable Infirmities, and will not make their faults greater than they are, but will ſee the *willingneſs of the Spirit when the Fleſh is weak.* If malignant Men will ſee the Mote of a Ceremonious

monious Errour or frailty in their Brothers eye, and call it a *Beam*, becauſe a Beam is in their own; Chriſt will not joyn with them in their Malignity and Injuſtice, but will bid him caſt the firſt Stone that is without Sin; *Joh.* 8. 7.

4. And yet he will not juſtifie the leaſt ſinful Thought, or Word, or Deed, nor the leaſt faulty imperfection in their Faith, Love or Obedience: For no man hateth any of theſe ſo much as Chriſt doth, in whomſoever they are found. Do you cry out againſt *Errour*, *Sedition*, *Rebellion*, *Diſobedience*, *Schiſm*, *Diviſions?* So doth Chriſt, and ſo do all his true Diſciples: We all agree with you in this. But if the Queſtion be either, *Who they are that are herein guilty?* or, *In whom any Sin is reigning, wilful and unpardoned?* here ſee that you go not beyond proof: For Chriſt will not own the Condemners of the Juſt, nor confirm any mans unrighteous and malicious Cenſure.

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2. And as I adviſe you before you accuſe any, to know whether Chriſt

be of your mind, and will be againſt them, or will take their parts; ſo next I adviſe you, as you love your ſelves, to think well how great a Sin malignant and falſe accuſing is.

1. It ſheweth much of the Devil in your Hearts, whether you ſee it or not, it is no better: He is malicious, a Murderer, a Lyar, and the Accuſer of the Juſt, and Slanderers are called by his Name, διάβολοι, as aforeſaid.

2. If it be for Chriſt's Cauſe, for Truth or Righteouſneſs, or done in Malice, againſt Godlineſs or Faith, Chriſt taketh it all as done againſt himſelf, *Mat.* 25. For it is not only againſt his Servants, but alſo for their obeying and ſerving him: It is he that commanded them, as is aforeſaid.

3. You ſet your ſelf againſt the *Office* alſo of Chriſt; He is the Advocate of his Servants, He hath undertaken their Defence, and do you think to overcome him? it is he that juſtifieth us, (for all that Faith, and Zeal, and Holineſs, for which we are accuſed and perſecuted by the world) and who then ſhall condemn us? It is he that is for us, who then is he that will be againſt

againſt us? ſhall we not be more than Conquerors through him whoſe power hath conquered for us, and whoſe victorious Love will not forſake us? *Rom.* 8. 34, &c. Remember in what a manner he ſaid, *Act.* 9. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? it is hard for thee to kick againſt the Pricks:* And to him that offendeth one of thoſe little deſpiſed ones that believe in him, that it were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the Sea.

And it is not only to the groſs Perſecuting *Accuſers* of the juſt that I give this Advice, but I beſeech you all to take heed of any raſh *Accuſing* of the *Juſt*; for the wrong is moſt to God himſelf, and the hurt to you, and Chriſt will be againſt you.

1. Some there are, that when they have by Ignorance, or a ſtretching Conſcience, for worldly intereſt conſented to ſome ſinful practices, are led by that ſame unhappy intereſt, to juſtifie firſt what they do themſelves, and then to accuſe all thoſe as Erroneous, Preciſe, or Schiſmatical, that are againſt their choice and practice: Moſt men

that live in ſin for intereſt, do think that they muſt be ſecured from the accuſations of Conſcience, and the diſgrace of ſinning, by juſtifying their ſin, and accuſing thoſe as the ſinners that are againſt it, and dare not ſin as much as they; but how ſad a defence will this prove at laſt, which ſo much addeth to their Crime!

2. There are ſome on the contrary, that in ignorance having taken a *Duty* or a *lawful Practice* for a *Sin*, (as Baptizing Infants, Singing *David*'s Pſalms, Praying conſtantly in Families, Obſerving the Lords day, Praying oft in the ſame words, Communicating with ſome faulty Churches, or ſuch as theſe men condemn, and ſuch like) they hereupon become the raſh and falſe accuſers of thoſe that be not as erroneous as themſelves; thus did the *Phariſees* by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; thus did the Jewiſh Teachers, *Act.* 15. that ſaid, *Except ye be Circumciſed and keep the Law of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved:* Thus did the Jewiſh Chriſtians againſt *Peter*, Act. 11. 23. *They contended with him, ſaying, Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them:* And after his miracu-

raculous Conviction by this cenſorioufneſs, they drew him to that Separation which *Paul* doth blame him for, *Gal.* 2. 12, 13, 14. and *Barnabas* and others diſſembled with him, for fear of the cenſures of theſe erroneous men; for it is not the leaſt miſchievous effect of theſe falſe Accuſations and Cenſures, that they frighten many weak Chriſtians from duty and into ſin, while they hear that this or that is no duty, or is ſome heinous ſin, and have not the underſtanding to try and judge, they are carryed away with the name and noiſe; and ſome ſuch as *Peter* and *Barnabas* walk not uprightly, but ſtep out of the way for fear of diſpleaſing them, or being accuſed by them as others are; and it is not a little ſhame, guilt and ſuffering that this courſe hath brought upon the Miniſters themſelves.

3. And there are ſome that here more hainouſly offend, *Familiſts*, *Ranters*, *Seekers*, *Quakers*, and too many more; that while they are guilty themſelves of lamentable errours, fear not to accuſe almoſt all the Churches of Chriſt on earth, as if they were not his Churches at all, and had no true

Religion, Miniſtry, Ordinances, and were not to be communicated with. The Papiſts that burn men as Hereticks for the Truth, I think accuſe not ſo many of Chriſts Miniſters and Churches, nor ſo deeply as ſome of theſe Sects do; yea and father this malignity on the Spirit of God: But Chriſt will defend and juſtifie his Churches againſt all theſe falſe Accuſers.

O litle do either Papiſts or any other Sectaries know how hainous a crime Chriſt will take it, to accuſe the greateſt part of Chriſtians on earth, as being Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, or no true Churches, or having no true Religion, or part in Chriſt or in his Spirit; and for a worldly Faction on one ſide, or a ſick-brained, ſelf-conceited Sect on the other ſide to appropriate the title of the Church or Saints to themſelves alone, and ſay to moſt of the Members of Chriſt, *You are none of his!* If to accuſe falſly *one man* when his eſtate only is concerned in it, and that before a ſingle Judicature, be ſo great a Crime as Scripture maketh it, what is it openly before God and the World, raſhly or falſly to accuſe whole Churches

Churches and Countreys of Chriſtians, yea the faithfulleſt of Chriſts Miniſters, with bitter ſcorns, as many of the aforeſaid Sectaries do; yea, almoſt all the Church of Chriſt, in this and almoſt all former ages! For my part, (though ſome cenſure me for it) I am afraid of *too bold Cenſuring* even of Papiſts, or of honeſt Heathens, ſuch as were *Antonine*, *Cicero*, and ſuch others that never heard the Goſpel of Chriſt.

II. My next advice is to thoſe that are thus accuſed by others, about Religion, or of Sin.

1. Do not preſently juſtifie your ſelves, becauſe you love not to be blamed; raſh ſelf-juſtifying may be more hurtful to you, than other mens raſh accuſing you. Errour and ſin is not ſo rare a thing, even among good men, that it ſhould be taken for hard meaſure to be judged erroneous, or ſinners: Who knoweth his ſecret faults? *Pſal.* 19. We muſt daily Pray, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes!* Little do moſt know how great a number of falſhoods

are received into the minds of moſt good Chriſtians in the world, yea of the beſt, much more of the more ignorant ſort; and therefore we have great cauſe to be ſtill cautelouſly ſuſpicious of our ſelves; and it is a mercy to have notice of our ſins and errours, from whomſoever, Friends or Foes.

Trie therefore, leſt it ſhould prove an errour or ſin that you are accuſed of; confeſs it not to be ſuch, becauſe another calleth it ſuch; but yet let him know that you are willing of his help for your information and Conviction.

It is ſuppoſed that none of us love errour as errour, or ſin as ſin, or any evil as ſuch; it is no *evil* that is the object of a ſinners *will* and *choice*, but a *miſplaced good*, even a *leſſer good* ſet againſt or *inſtead* of a greater; (as the Creature inſtead of the Creator, and Corporal inſtead of Spiritual, *&c.*) We do not *love* and *will malum, ſed male*, not evil, but evilly: It is not the *thing loved* that is *evil it ſelf*, but the *act of Loving it*, (or doing it:) The *Fruit* that *Adam* did eat was not evil, but *eating* it was; Meat, Drink, Pleaſure-

able

able Objects, Beauty, Money, Lands, Honours, are all good, but the inordinate Love and Uſe of them is the evil.

Our nature therefore giveth this advantage to our Monitors; we would all be delivered from *evil as evil*, and therefore thankfully accept their help.

Humanum eſt errare; how little doth that man know himſelf, or what man is, who taketh it for an injury to be ſuppoſed to have *Errours*: But to deny *neceſſary ſaving Verities*, or to be *unwilling* to *ſee our Errors* by finding out the Truth, or *proudly to defend* them, becauſe we have once owned them, and to be raſh and confident propagators of ſuch errors, and to rage againſt wiſer men that are againſt our folly, and ignorantly to cry them down as ignorant, and to charge all this on the Spirit of God, this is an unchriſtian and inhumane ſort of erring. Try therefore with a due ſuſpicion of your ſelves, leſt your accuſation ſhould be true, and you be found in the miſtake.

The ſame I ſay when you are accuſed of any *Sin*: Alas, *Sin* is not ſo *rare*

a thing with any of us, but that we may well fear and try the caſe, leſt we ſhould be guilty.

2. My next Advice is, *Take heed leſt you go about to intereſs Chriſt in any of your Sins or Errours,* or leſt *you expect that he ſhould juſtifie them.* It is a greater Sin which many erring men are guilty of in this kind, than is commonly perceived. It is well that men *would* do that which *God owneth* if they *knew it*; but it is dangerous to ſay, that he *owneth what he abhorreth:* To father Falſhood on the God of Truth, and Sin on the God of Holineſs, is a fearful Crime. God that would not endure *falſe Fire*, Lev. 10. or to be worſhipped *like an Idol*, no nor to have *holy things prophaned*, will much leſs endure to be made the Father of Lies and Wickedneſs.

1. Conſider, that this is to ſet him againſt himſelf who is the God of Truth and Holineſs.

2. This is to uſe his Name againſt his Word, which is the Word of Truth and Holineſs.

3. This is to put him in the place of Satan, and to father on him the Devils

vils works, who is a Lyar, and the Father of it.

4. This is it which the falſe Prophets are ſo heavily threatned for in Scripture.

5. This is to fight againſt God's Kingdom, and the Grace of Chriſt, and the work of the Spirit in his own Name.

6. This is the direct Breach of the third Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain:* A *Lie*, and *Vanity* oft ſignifie the ſame thing in Scripture. This Sin is of the nature of *Perjury*, which is appealing to God, as owning and approving a Falſhood; and do not they ſo that falſly ſay, *God ſaith this, and that; and the other thing in the Scripture, and by his Spirit in me*, which he never ſaid, yea, which no one ſo much abhorreth as he; and will you father on God that *one thing* which he hateth? God tells you that he *will not hold him guiltleſs* (that is, he will notably condemn and puniſh ſuch) as thus prophanely and audaciouſly *take his Name in vain*, or uſe it to patronize a Lie.

I am often near trembling, to hear ſome of our *Tremblers*, yea and ſome others,

others, abuſe abundance of plain Texts of Scripture, and expound them with palpable falſhood, and deny the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, about Chriſts Perſon, his Interceſſion, his Coming again, his Laws, his Kingdom, his Judgment, and pouring out many heathenish and groſs Errours, and fathering all this with raging Confidence on God himſelf, and ſaying, *I am ſure this is true; the Spirit infallibly tells me ſo; God ſpeaketh it in me; I no more doubt of it, than whether I live; He that doubteth is damned; the light within me aſſureth me that this is true, and the meaning of the Scripture.* O patient God! O ſinful Man! O ſubtle Serpent! O dark unhappy World!

O pitiful Profeſſors of Faith, that will be changed or ſhaken by ſuch hainous Sin, as if they heard an Oracle of God. Our God is *Love*, and yet he is a *Conſuming Fire:* Take heed what you ſay of him, and what you father on him: If Pride, Blindneſs and Deceit do carry you to blaſpheme him, your Confidence will not make Chriſt juſtifie it.

3. But

3. But I further adviſe you: If indeed it be *Truth and Duty* which men accuſe you for, even ſuch as Chriſt in the ſacred Scriptures did preſcribe, doubt not but he will juſtifie you againſt all Accuſers; and let this ſatisfie you however you are ſlandered, againſt all. As, if your Sins were few and ſmall, there would be leſs uſe of a Saviour to forgive them; ſo, if your Slanders by malignant Lyars be few and ſmall, you will have the leſs uſe for Chriſt to juſtifie you. If it be, *All men that revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly* (or *lying*) *for Chriſt's ſake*; *Bleſſed are ye*, ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 5. 11. And if you believe him, you may *rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven*; *and ſo perſecuted they the Prophets before you.* How many things are here to be obſerved? It is ſuppoſed to be *Lyes* that are reported of you; and this not of one ſort only, but *all manner of Evil*; as if you were impious againſt God, uncharitable and unjuſt towards men, Hereticks againſt Truth, Schiſmaticks againſt Unity, Rebells and diſo-

diſobedient againſt Authority, and all the reſt: And of all theſe have the Juſt been ordinarily accuſed; and this is not by ſome one exaſperated Perſon in a Corner, whom few believe, but by *all men*, that is the common voice of deluded Adverſaries; and it is not only *belying*, but *reviling*, yea and *perſecuting*; yet muſt you not only be patient, but *joyful and exceeding glad*, becauſe it is *for Chriſt*, and he will *juſtifie you*, and give you a *great Reward in Heaven*. Here is a noble work for Faith, to learn and practiſe this Leſſon of Croſs-bearing, Hope and Joy. The Judge is at the Door, who ſeeth us, and all our Caſe, and is more concerned in it than we are: Be not too haſty for a full Vindication! Cannot you ſtay till the Aſſizes? Were it not that Slanderers hurt *others* and *themſelves*, how ſmall a matter were their thoughts and words to you? Will a malignant thought of a dying worm deject you from any real Honour or Felicity? Is it in the power of a lying Tongue, or of many, how high, or how credible ſoever eſteemed, to deprive you of your Innocency, or the approbation of God, or your Adoption, or Chriſts

Ju-

Juſtification, or your everlaſting Glory and Reward? Do you truſt Chriſt for your Souls, and cannot you truſt him with your Names? Is God your God, and is not his Approbation enough for you? Is Man nothing to you, who is poſting to Duſt and Judgment, and yet cannot you bear his lying words or thoughts? How will you bear the Croſs of Martyrdom, which is to die for well-doing, under the reputation of Malefactors, if you cannot bear falſe words or thoughts? If you ſay, *It is the Truth that is diſhonoured through my Diſhonour:* I anſwer,

1. God is ſufficient to vindicate his Truth: Every ſlanderous mouth ſhall ſoon be ſtopped, and God will be proved true, and all men Lyars, *Rom.* 3.

2. And he hath promiſed to *bring forth your Righteouſneſs as the Light*, your Names ſhall riſe as the Morning-Sun, when the moſt malignant Darkneſs ſeemed to bury them. Chriſt is not in Heaven reputed a Blaſphemer, nor a Rebel againſt *Cæſar*; nor is *Paul* there taken for a peſtilent Fellow, or a mover of Sedition among the people; nor the Croſs of Chriſt for Fooliſhneſs or a Stumbling-

bling-block, nor are true Chriſtians there reproached, or excommunicated as Hereticks or Evil-doers. Of how ſmall regard is the Judgment of Man to him that fully truſteth to Chriſt's Juſtification! which you may be ſure of, ſo far as the Scriptures truly underſtood do juſtifie you.

III. My next Counſel is, to thoſe that are unreſolved which Cauſe or ſide is right, and to be choſen, whileſt moſt men are Accuſers of each other: One talketh againſt this thing, and another againſt that, one againſt this Doctrine, and practice, and another againſt that, and ſo many Parties accuſe all the reſt, that it diſtracteth ignorant Perſons.

Either the things which they differ about are ſuch as Chriſt hath told us his mind of in the Scripture, or not; if not, then pity and bear with the Contenders on both ſides; interpoſe not your Judgment raſhly, but let every one enjoy his own: *Paul* and *Barnabas*, as well as *Martha* and *Mary*, may differ about Perſons and Circumſtances of Duty: But if Chriſt have already decided the Caſe, let that determine you: What need

need you more? Is the Controverſie whether God or Man ſhould be firſt obeyed? whether Heaven or Earth, Chriſt or the Pleaſures of Sin ſhould be preferred? whether we ſhould live after the Fleſh, or the Spirit? In all ſuch caſes it is eaſie to know what Chriſt doth judge. I hope you do not think that he will take part with the ſenſual, or the covetous, or the malignant Enemies of a godly Life; nor that he will turn to the Oppreſſors or Perſecutors of the Juſt; nor that he will renounce his own Word, becauſe any men, how great or Reverend ſoever, miſapply it, or contradict it; nor that he will call Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, Worldlineſs, Idleneſs, Filthineſs or Pride, by gentle, extenuating, deceitful Names, though the guilty and impenitent do ſo.

Some would perſwade you that Chriſt and his Spirit could not ſpeak ſo much ſenſe as to become intelligible: And though every Friend can intelligibly write you his mind, yet Chriſt could not, or would not; and that you may underſtand Poets and Orators, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*; and Philoſphers, Law-

Lawyers, Phyſicians, Hiſtorians, yea the voluminous Statutes of Lawgivers, and Canons of the Church; but the Holy Scriptures you cannot underſtand: But it is not reproaching Chriſt that is the way to have him juſtifie your Cauſe or you. Though ambiguity of words make Scripture, as all other Writings, ſo far difficult as to need ſome Skill in thoſe words to him that will underſtand them; and though a carnal blinded mind cannot (ſavingly in love and lively ſenſe) receive the ſpiritual things of God, yet men ſhall ſhortly be convinced, that the *Light of the World was not inviſible*, though the *Darkneſs comprehend it not*, and that the Wiſdom of God hath ſpoken intelligibly, and in all neceſſary things you may certainly know which part Chriſt taketh.

But alas, Chriſt is unſeen, and therefore little regarded by multitudes who cuſtomarily honour his Name. As among the *Turks*, we blame not him that rather asketh what the Emperour or Baſhaw commandeth, than what *Mahomet* commandeth; ſo theſe that honour Chriſt but as the *Turks* honour *Mahomet*, do

do far more regard which ſide their *Landlord* takes, or which ſide ſuch a *Lord*, or *Biſhop*, or *Prince* is for, than which part Chriſt is for. O Sirs! You would all fain have Chriſt to be your Advocate at laſt: As ever you would have him be for you then, be now for that which he is for, and hath foretold you he will juſtifie.

O that you were all but truly *willing* to know what it is that Chriſt is for, (whether for a holy, or a worldly or fleſhly Mind and Life); and that you were but reſolved to be for that which Chriſt is for, as far as by diligent ſearch you can know it. I ſhould hope then that he would not leave you to damnable miſtake, but help you to underſtand his will for your Salvation.

Uſe. And here you may ſee, that it is falſe Doctrine which ſome men confidently preach, that *There is no ſuch thing as Chriſts juſtifying his People* againſt *falſe accuſations*; As when we tell

tell them, that againſt the accuſation of being *finally Impenitent, Unbelievers, Unconverted, Unholy*, they muſt be juſtified by their own perſonal *Repentance, Faith, Converſion* and *Holineſs*, or not at all; they have no ſhift againſt the plain Truth, but to tell us, that we *have need of no ſuch Juſtification: The Devil will have ſomething elſe to do, than falſly to accuſe us.* But on the contrary,

1. Is not the Devil the *Accuſer of the Brethren?* and is he not the Father of lies. Is not his Name *Diabolus*, a *falſe* accuſer?

2. Doth he not ſet the wicked on his work in this Life, falſly to accuſe the faithful, and their Faith and Duty, that it may reflect on God himſelf? Yea, through the remnant of ignorance and Sin, Chriſts Servants too oft falſly accuſe one another, as unſound, Erroneous, Heretical, *&c.* Yea darkneſs cauſeth good mens Conſciences too often falſly to accuſe themſelves. And is it not Chriſts Office to be the *advocate of the juſt?* and in juſtifying them to juſtifie himſelf, and his Cauſe and Truth; *Rom.* 3. 4, 26. And

is

is it not much of the work of that glorious day, to bring all hidden things to light, and to juſtifie his cauſe, and Servants againſt all the falſe accuſations that ever were brought againſt them? and thus to ſhame all falſhood and unrighteouſneſs, and to judge the World in truth?

3. Was it not a falſe accuſation that Satan brought againſt *Job*? and did not God very ſolemnly juſtifie him againſt it? Is not Satans Kingdom upheld in the World, by making men in all Nations believe, that *Believers* are *deceived*, *falſe Believers*, and that Chriſts Servants are wicked, Hypocrites, the Plagues and Troublers of the Earth? And is there not a day to juſtifie them againſt all this?

4. If we are not juſtified againſt falſe accuſation, we are juſtified againſt *none at all:* For Chriſt will not juſtifie us againſt the Truth. It is Juſtification by *Plea* and Sentence that we are now ſpeaking of: Juſtification ſometime ſignifieth *making us juſt*, and ſometime *Judging* and *maintaining* us to be juſt. The firſt doth *make* an *unrighteous* and *ungodly man juſt*, by con-

converting him, and giving him Repentance toward God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and pardoning his Sins, and giving him right to the Heavenly Inheritance: This is our firſt Conſtitutive Juſtification. But when God hath thus *made us* juſt by the merits of Chriſts Righteouſneſs,

1. He *virtually* by the *Law of Grace* doth *pronounce us juſt*, and this againſt the curſe of the condemning Law of innocency.

2. And in *Judgment* Chriſt as our *Advocate* will *maintain* us juſt.

3. And Chriſt our *Judge*, will *judge us juſt*, againſt all that can be brought againſt us: But how far juſt? Not ſuch as *never ſinned*; nor ſuch as by *imputation* of his *Righteouſneſs* are by God *accounted never to have ſinned*; nor ſuch as *never deſerved death*: But ſuch as *are not to be condemned* to *pain of ſenſe or loſs*, but have *right to the free gift of Life Eternal*, *becauſe Chriſt for them ſatisfied Juſtice*, and *fulfilled all Righteouſneſs*, and *merited all this for them*, *even Forgiveneſs*, *Grace and Glory*, *and they being penitent Believers have part in*

in him, and ſincerely obeyed him to the Death.

And if it were never ſo true, that no *actual falſe accuſation* would be urged againſt believers, yet is it true that we ſhall be juſtified againſt even a *virtual and poſſible accuſation:* And where there is not *ſo much as this*, there needeth *no Juſtification* by *Plea*, *by Witneſs*, or by *Sentence.*

And if we are accuſed to have been *Sinners*, it is not to be denyed; If it be ſaid that our Sin deſerved death, it muſt be granted: But if it be ſaid,

1. That we were finally impenitent unbelievers.
2. Or have no part in Chriſt.
3. Or had no pardon of Sin.
4. Or had no right to Life Eternal.
5. And therefore are to be condemned; all this being falſe, Chriſt will juſtifie us againſt it; and againſt all other falſe accuſation of Men or Devils.

Doct. Laſt. *Chriſt doth not only plead his own Righteouſneſs for* Mary's *Juſtification, but juſtifie her choice of the better part,*

part, and decree that it ſhall not be taken from her.

I. Indeed all the good that we have is his own as the giver, though ſome be alſo *ours* as the *actors* and *poſſeſſours*: And Chriſt will juſtifie all that is of himſelf: Nothing but good cometh from Infinite good, or him that came to deſtroy the works of the Devil. They that accuſe our Grace or Duty, accuſe Chriſt, his Spirit and his Law: And will he not juſtifie himſelf? (But of this before.)

II. He that *praiſeth* his Servants Holineſs and Duty, and will praiſe them in Judgment, doth ſo far juſtifie them. *Mat.*25. *Well done, good and faithful Servant!* Yea, he that calleth *Eternal Glory, their Reward, and the Crown of Righteouſneſs given by God the righteous Judge, to ſuch as have fought a good fight, and finiſhed their courſe, and love the appearing of Chriſt*; and he that is the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, and will judge all men according to their works, and pronounceth them Bleſſed that do his Commandments, that they may have right to

to the Tree of Life, (2 *Tim.* 4. 8, 9 *Heb.* 5. 9. *Rev.* 22. 14, *&c.*) doth ſurely ſo far juſtifie this perſonal obedience and righteouſneſs of theirs.

But he juſtifieth only againſt falſe accuſations; and not againſt the charge of culpable imperfection. And do they therefore talk wiſely that ſay, It is no Righteouſneſs, and no Juſtification, becauſe it is *imperfect?* Doth any wiſe man pretend to perſonal perfect Righteouſneſs? And doth not God many hundred times in Scripture call that *Righteouſneſs* and equivalent which is imperfect? And will he juſtifie or ſave any that hath no ſuch Righteouſneſs? Chriſt was perfectly righteous for us, to merit the pardon and Salvation of Believers, and the acceptance of their imperfect Righteouſneſs; and not to bring any to Heaven that hath no inherent perſonal Righteouſneſs.

There are ſome that ſeem by their arguing to think that ſo much honour as we give to our Holineſs and Duty, ſo much we take from Chriſt, and to praiſe his Saints is to diſhonour him: (And yet theſe men love and look for praiſe.) But wiſe men will not believe

that the greatneſs of the Gift is a diſhonour to the Giver, or the excellency of the Houſe or Work a diſhonour to the Builder or Work-man, or the recovered Health of the Patient a diſhonour to the Phyſician; elſe what a diſhonour will our Salvation be to Chriſt, when we are perfectly holy, without Spot or wrinckle, and have no Sin! It will be then by the *Communication* of his *Holineſs*; as Motion, Light and Heat is from the Sun; and ſo it is now though we are imperfect: God accepteth, praiſeth, and *in tantum* proportionably juſtifieth our imperfect Righteouſneſs for the ſake and merits of his that was perfect.

I never met with any of this mind, but if one accuſe them of leſs than Infidelity, Impenitence, Impiety and Hypocriſie, they will ſeek to juſtifie themſelves: And why will they juſtifie themſelves in that which God will not juſtifie them in? What Friend of Chriſt will not juſtifie the Generation of the Juſt, when Malignants call them all *deluded Hypocrites?* and I know no ſober man but expecteth that every Judge ſhould juſtifie the wrongfully accuſed and their Cauſe.

Obj.

Obj. *To juſtifie a good Cauſe is not to juſtifie the Perſon.*

Anſw. Untrue. It is not to juſtifie him in all Reſpects, but it is to juſtifie him as to that Cauſe.

Obj. *This is but before men.*

Anſw. God doth more hate the condemning of the Juſt than any man doth.

Obj. *This is but as to a particular Cauſe, and not an univerſal Juſtification.*

Anſw. And the juſtifying of a *Believer* and *penitent obedient Saint* by his Faith, and Repentance, and Obedience, is but the juſtifying him in that particular Cauſe, which is the *medium* of his part in Chriſt; the merit of whoſe Righteouſneſs and Sacrifice procureth the pardon of all his Sins, and his right to the free Gift of Life eternally, and ſo far juſtifyeth him againſt the guilt of his Sin, and the Condemnation of the Law.

He that is not firſt made a penitent Believer, and juſtified againſt chargable Infidelity, Impenitence and Hypocriſie, ſhall never be juſtified by Chriſt's Merits and Sentence againſt the Curſe and Penalty of the Law.

II. But *Chriſt doth not only juſtifie* Mary *and her Choice, but decree that it*

ſhall not be taken from her. For,

1. He hath by his Covenant given the beſt and greateſt things, and that for ever to every one that will but thankfully accept and chooſe them.

2. And what he offereth and promiſeth he decreeth.

3. And what he decreeth and promiſeth he performeth.

For, who is it that ſhould take it from her, or from any Believer? Or, *who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God?*

1. Not *the Malice of Satan*; elſe no Believer ſhould be ſaved. If the Devil could deprive us of the Goſpel, or of Grace, it ſhould be ſurely done: If he could have kept the World from being redeemed by Chriſt, it had never been redeemed; if he could keep men unconvinced, unconverted, and unpardoned, he would ſurely do it.

2. *Not any of his malignant Inſtruments*, for God will not give them power to make a godly man ungodly, and the Devil hath no ſuch power to give them.

3. *Not the Envy of erroneous Zealots*, or *uncharitable Hypocrites*. The Prodigal ſhall not be turned out of Doors, becauſe his elder Brother envieth his Entertainment.

ment. The Envy of the *Jews* ſhall not hinder the Bleſſing of the *Gentiles*. Reſolvedly chooſe the beſt, and you ſhall have it.

Uſe 1. O that all men would take this ſure and neceſſary direction of Chriſt for the choice of their Comforts, Hopes and Happineſs: All men had rather be happy for ever, than for a little while; and what elſe but Holineſs and Heaven, Chriſt, Grace and Glory will be ſuch a durable Felicity? Will you chooſe the favour of great men, and hopes of Preferment and worldly Honours; and can you ſay, that this ſhall not be taken from you? Will you chooſe Lands and Money, and the Proſpering of your Endeavours in growing rich; and can you ſay that theſe ſhall not be taken from you? Will you chooſe Mirth and Sport, and fleſhly Luſt, and the pleaſing of your Appetites and Fancies; and can you ſay that theſe ſhall not be taken from you? Muſt not Life it ſelf be ſhortly taken from you, and therefore all the Pleaſures of this Life? If theſe things be your Choice,

Chriſt hath already foretold you what you may expect, *Luk.* 12. 19, 20. *Thou Fool, this night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee, and then whoſe ſhall all theſe things be which thou haſt provided? So is he that layeth up Treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.* And, *Luk.* 16. 25. *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented? Wherefore then do you ſpend money for that which is not Bread; and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently to* Chriſt, *and eat that which is good, and let your Soul delight it ſelf in fatneſs: Incline your Ear, and come unto him; hear, and your Soul ſhall live;* and *he will make an everlaſting Covenant of ſure mercies with you,* Iſa. 55. 2, 3. *Labour not for the Food which periſheth, but for that which endureth to everlaſting Life,* which Chriſt will give you; *Joh.* 6. 27. *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures on Earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and ſteal; but lay up for your ſelves Treaſure in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt do corrupt, nor Thieves break through and ſteal;* Mat. 6. 19, 20. *The time is ſhort, therefore weep and rejoyce;*

buy

buy and poſſeſs, and uſe the World as though you did it not; for the faſhion of this World paſſeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. O be not as the wicked who have their portion in this life, in the *treaſure of their Bellies,* Pſal. 17. 14. *For their hopes ſoon periſh as the Ruſh that groweth but in the mire, and as the Spider's web, and as the giving up of the Ghoſt.* Fleſh will fail you, and the World will fail you; But God will be a never-failing *Portion to all that do but ſincerely chooſe him*; Pſal. 73. 25, 26. If you drink here, you ſhall thirſt again, and if you eat here, you ſhall hunger again; but if Chriſt and his Spirit be your meat and drink, *you ſhall hunger and thirſt no more for ever. Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* O do not prophanely ſell ſuch a Birth-right for a Morſel; you ſhall have no better than you chooſe; ſhew not your ſelves unworthy of eternal life, by preferring known vanity before it. If you loſt Heaven becauſe you could not have it, and would have a Chriſt and Holineſs, but could not, your Caſe would not be all ſo bad, as to be the wilful refuſers of your own Salvation, and loſe it becauſe you would not have it. Do not ſay, *We*

would be ſaved, if you would not be ſaved from your Sin, and have that Holineſs and Communion with God which is your Salvation; and do not ſay, we would have God and Chriſt, and Holineſs, if the Pleaſures of Sin ſeem better to you, and you chooſe it firſt? You may as well ſay plainly, We will have no God, no Chriſt, no Heaven, as ſay, *We had rather have the Pleaſures of Sin*; and you may as well *ſay ſo*, as *chooſe ſo*, and *do ſo*. There are ſome deceived Libertines that think that every good deſire is the mark of a juſtified Soul, eſpecially, if it be accompanyed with a willingneſs that Chriſt's Righteouſneſs ſhould juſtifie them, and a belief that it will do ſo, though they love ſinful pleaſure, profit and honour, better than God and Holineſs, and Heaven, and had rather have the Felicity of an Epicure, than of a Saint.

But Chriſt himſelf hath judged contrarily: He ſaith, *He cannot be his Diſciple that loveth any thing more than him*, Mat. 10. Luk. 14.26.23. And he that will have this Pearl of greateſt price, muſt think nothing too dear, but ſell all that he hath to buy it; *Mat.* 13.46. To be *Lovers of Pleaſure more than Lovers of God*, is the brand of the worſt times

times and perſons; 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. Let any man that can ſhew us one Promiſe of God for the ſaving of any that ſeek not firſt God's Kingdom, and its Righteouſneſs, *Mat.* 6. 33. and *labour not* chiefly *for the food that periſheth not*; and loveth not God above the World, and Holineſs more than the Pleaſures of Sin.

If this be not ſo, where can you fix the difference between the juſtified and them that periſh. Would God make ſuch a difference in the World to come, if there were none here? Doth Chriſt and his Spirit do no more noble a work in ſanctifying Souls than ſo? If one may be juſtified that loveth one ſinful Pleaſure better than God, and Grace, and Glory, why not he that loveth another, and another, and all? If Fornication, why not Gluttony? If Gluttony, why not Drunkenneſs? If Drunkenneſs, why not Covetouſneſs, and Ambition, and all evil? But *Paul* ſaith, *Eph.* 5. 6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words; for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God on the Children of Diſobedience.* And, *Without Holineſs none ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. *Not every one that ſaith, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into Heaven*; no, not thoſe Be-

lievers that *propheſied*, and *did wonders*, and *caſt out Devils in Chriſt's Name*, but only they that *do the Will of God*: To the reſt he will ſay, *Depart from me, ye workers of Iniquity, I know you not.*

How oft is it ſaid, that all ſhall be judged *according to their works?* and Chriſt ſo deſcribeth his own Judgment, *Mat.* 25. *Can any Man believe?* *Jam.* 2. and 1 *Joh.* 3. and 4. *Rom.* 8. 1, to 14. *Rom.* 2. and a multitude ſuch Texts, and yet believe that a bare belief that Chriſt's Righteouſneſs is imputed to us, will prove any one are juſtified who loveth his Sin better than the God, Grace and Glory; and conſequently, that Chriſt's Members differ but imputatively from the Children of the Devil; for wherein is a wicked man worſe than the godly, but in this? *He that loveth the World* (more than God) *the Love of the Father is not in him!* Why, may not Life or Pleaſure *ſeparate us from the Love of God* if we love them better? *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. Nay, he loveth not God at all in a proper ſence, who loveth him not as God; and he loveth him not at all as God, who loveth him not as better than the pleaſure of Sin, but only as a leſſer good.

Obj. *To love God above all ſinful pleaſure*

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is the fruit and ripeneſs of Grace, but the ſeed doth not reach ſo high.

Anſ. It's true, if you call preparatory Grace that ſeed; but ſuch are in no juſtified ſtate; but it is not true if you mean by the ſeed any thing proper to a juſtified man, as all the Texts fore-cited ſhew.

Obj. *What can the ſtrongeſt Chriſtian do more than love God above all?*

Anſ. Among thoſe that love God above all, and Holineſs more than Sin, there may be an hundred different degrees; one may love him ſo much as to long after him and delight in him, and contemn all vanities, and overcome temptations much more eaſily and effectually than others; and another may do theſe more faintly, hardly, and with leſs delight.

Obj. *Doth* David, Peter, *and the Diſciples that all forſook Chriſt and fled, love him better than life at ſuch a time.*

Anſ. 1. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the rational Will, or Love, and ſenſitive Paſſion. 2. Between the Habit and the Act. 3. Between the ordinary courſe of Action, and a particular extraordinary Action.

The weakeſt true juſtified Chriſtian loveth God above the Creature, and perfect

perfect Holineſs above ſinful pleaſure.

1. As to the fixed Inclination and habit of the Soul (which is the Divine Nature.)

2. And in the ordinary Act or exerciſe of his Rational Love, and deliberate choice, and the ſeeking endeavour of his Life.

3. But not alwayes with the moſt paſſionate ſenſitive Love.

4. And paſſion (of fear or creature-Love) may in an extraordinary act both weaken the activity of Rational Spiritual Love, and bear down the executive power into outward contrary ſinful acts: But the predominancy of the holy nature will ſhew it ſelf, in raiſing the Soul from ſuch a fall, and cauſing it the more to hate and fear the Sin. There is difference between a ſwoune and death, and between an Infant and an Image: And ſo there was between the falls of *David*, *Lot*, *Peter*; and a wicked man, that had rather keep his Sin than leave it, and loveth ſuch pleaſure more than God.

Uſe. 2. Be thankful then, Chriſtians, for that Grace of Chriſt which cauſed you

you to make the wiſeſt choice; even of that which is the real durable felicity, and ſhall never be taken from you.

Had you choſen Houſes they might have been burnt: Had you choſen wealth or worldly honours, they might all have been taken from you; yea all would certainly have left you in diſtreſs. Men might have taken away your Eſtates, your Liberties, your Lives, but not your God, your Chriſt, your Heaven! They may take away your Bibles, and other Books; but they cannot take away your Grace: They may ſhut you out of the Synagogues, but not out of the love of God: They may impriſon you, baniſh you, cut out your Tongues that you can neither Preach nor Speak; but ſtill your Souls may have Communion with God: A *Tertullus* may call us Peſtilent Fellows and Seditious; Schiſmaticks may call us the Schiſmaticks, and Hereticks may call us the Hereticks, and Hypocrites may call us Hypocrites; but none of them can *make us* what they call us. They may with ſome (by Gods Permiſſion) take away the *Reputation* of your Innocency, but not your *Innocency* it ſelf. When a mans food is but on his Table it

it may be taken from him; if it be but in his Stomack, he may caſt it up: But it is ſafer when it is digeſted and turned into his ſubſtance. So may your Teachers, and Bibles, and Churches be taken from you, but not the Law and Goſpel which is written in your Hearts, and become a ſpiritual nature in you: What Triumphant challenges doth St. *Paul* make, *Rom.* 8. 37, 38, &c. *Who ſhall be againſt us? Who ſhall condemn us? What ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God.* The power of Men and Devils cannot do it. Death it ſelf the laſt enemy ſhall not do it. He will diſſolve this frame, and lay our Fleſh in duſt and darkneſs, and take away from us all the pleaſure and poſſeſſion of this World, but none of our chief good! Tyrants may deprive us of ſuch things as they chooſe themſelves; but not of that which we have choſen! If the Devil had ſaid truly, *Mat.* 4. and *Luk.* 3. 6, 7. *All this power will I give thee and the Glory of them, for that is delivered to me, and to whom I will I give it:* he might have ſaid alſo, *From whom I will I take it away?* But ſure he is no giver of Grace or Glory, and therefore cannot forcibly take them from us. Nay,

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by taking Life and all from us, men ſhall but haſten our perfect fruition of what we chooſe. Malice may ſnarl, and rail and ſlander; but cannot abate the Love of the Father, the Grace of the Son, the Communion of the *Spirit*, or deprive us of expected Glory.

Let not then worldly fury think that it hath undone us by taking away worldly things. They were none of our choice, nor our Truſt, nor Treaſure. If we are true Believers, our Treaſure, Heart and Converſation are in Heaven: Let Thieves get in and Steal it thence if they can. Papal Uſurpers may pretend *Peters* Keys to ſhut out all that obey not their Domination; But while God is our choice, and we ſhut not out our ſelves from Heaven, they talk more to their own hurt than ours, and can never take our choſen Treaſure from us.

Uſe. 3. But if none can take it from us, Let us not caſt it away our ſelves. All that Men and Devils can do againſt us, is but by allurements, or fear or other temptations, to deceive us into ſelf-deſtruction, and to caſt away that our ſelves which none can take from us. Great diſputes

diſputes we have about *free-will* and *perſeverance*; whether it be poſſible to fall away: But it is paſt diſpute with men that believe the Word of God, that we have ſuch Freedom, as that Chriſt, and Grace and Glory are freely offered to our accepting choice; and that he that truly chooſeth them ſhall have them, and that all that chooſe them not before that pleaſure of Sin which is ſet in competition againſt them, ſhall never have them; and that it's juſt ſo far poſſible or impoſſible to fall from Grace, as it is poſſible or impoſſible for the Will of one that hath Grace to change: So far as your ſerious choice continueth, you perſevere; and ſo far as you change it, you loſe your Grace. While you plead for the impoſſibility of the ill changing of your own wills, confute not your ſelves by your actual change: But when you feel them again *pleaſed* with the forbidden things of the Fleſh and World, and your appetite to holy pleaſure groweth dull and cold, me thinks you ſhould perceive that *in your ſelves* there is no impoſſibility of a change: If there be any, it is out of you, in God: And no doubt but a change of his decree and will

will is impoſſible. All the doubt is, whether he have decreed that no Gracious will ſhall change. It is certain that being ſo very mutable in our ſelves, that we could not perſevere were we left to our ſelves, we are all under many and great obligations, to *keep our ſelves in the Love of God*, Jude 21. and to *continue in the Love of Chriſt*, Joh. 15. 9. And we have need of Commands to *abide in Chriſt, and he in us*, Joh. 15. 4. And need of threatnings of deſtruction *if we fall away*, Joh. 15. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned*; 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.* Heb. 4. 1. *Let us fear leſt a promiſe being left of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* And all Gods threatnings are the objects of our belief and fear, *Heb.* 10. 26, 27, 29, 38. *If we ſin wilfully after the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful expectation of Judgment, and fiery indignation which devoureth the adverſaries: Of how much ſorer puniſhment ſuppoſe ye ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden*

trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing, and done deſpight to the Spirit of Grace. —— *If any draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him:* Which is the ſame with *Ezek.* 33. 18. *When the Righteous turneth from his Righteouſneſs he ſhall die,* & 18. 24.

Yea, God ſeeth it meet to give us the Comforts of the faithful ſtill conditionally; *Rev.* 2. & 3. *To him that overcometh,* &c. *He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved.* Col. 1. 21, 22, 23. *If ye continue in the Faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel.*

All this tells us, that notwithſtanding Gods unchangeable decree, the *care and diligent labour* to perſevere, is *our duty*, and that falling away muſt be *our fear*, and that there is no ſuch impoſſibility as excludeth this *care and fear*: And that ſo far as it is impoſſible to fall away, ſo far it is impoſſible not to fear falling away, with a preſerving watchful fear: And how far a *known impoſſibility* is the *object* of *due fear*, I leave to further conſideration.

God hath put us into the hands of Chriſt, in whoſe care and truſt is our chief

chief ſecurity: But he hath alſo truſted us, or put our perſeverance and Salvation more in our own hands than in any others, and ſo far that if we do not undo our ſelves by wilful and final neglect or refuſal of offered Grace and Mercy, we are ſafe. Chooſe Chriſt as Chriſt, and God as God, chooſe Grace and Glory before all the Vanities of the World, and before all the pleaſures of Sin for a ſeaſon, and ſtand to this choice unto the end, expreſſing it in faithful victorious endeavours, and then neither Men nor Devils, Life or Death, ſhall take your choſen Treaſure from you.

Obj. *I can eaſily keep up a reſolved choice of God*, and *Holineſs* and *Heaven*, *but I cannot ſo conſtantly keep up the rejection of fleſhly pleaſures*, and *Profit* and *Honour*, *which would be for the time preferred.*

Anſ. The worſt man would have God and Heaven ſo far as to give him the deſires of his Fleſh, and keep him from all pain and miſery: But is it not a plain contradiction, to ſay in proper ſpeech, *I would have God as God, that is, as Beſt, but I would have pleaſant Vanity as better? I can eaſily love my Wife as a Wife, but I cannot forbear loving Harlots better?*

better? I can reſolve for temperance, but I cannot reſolve againſt Gluttony and Drunkenneſs? I am reſolved for Truth, but not againſt Lying. Juſt ſuch is that, to reſolve for God and Holineſs, but not againſt the Pleaſures of Sin which alienate the Heart from God.

Obj. *But how doth a man chooſe God and Holineſs in the hour of his Sin, when he is chooſing forbidden pleaſure?*

Anſ. The act of Sin is not a chooſing God and Holineſs, but ſomewhat that is contrary: But every act of the will which is againſt God and Holineſs, is not a rejecting of them, or a retracting of our choice, nor inconſiſtent with it; but perhaps only an interruption of the exerciſe and an abatement of the degree; Play-fellows may draw a Child to *diſobey a Father* for love of play, and them, when yet he doth not forſake his Father, nor love them better; but only forgets him, or abateth deſire through the diverſion of the Sport.

Qu. *What is it that is our Duty in order to the unchangeableneſs of our own Wills and Choice?*

Anſ. 1. Truſt not your ſelves too far: The will goeth not againſt the minds appre-

apprehenſions; and a mans mind is a very dark, weak, mutable thing: What a Temptation, or a ſubtil Wrangler or Argument, or a new thought may do upon us, we do not well know. Preſumption ſeldom eſcapeth danger. A wiſe man feareth and departeth from evil: Confidence in your own underſtanding, goodneſs and ſtabiſity, is the prognoſtick of backſliding.

2. Away from the Temptations which do moſt ſtrongly allure the fleſh: To be over-pleaſed with things temporal and ſenſible, turneth the Heart from things Spiritual and Eternal. To deſire a more pleaſing condition to the fleſh, is to deſire ſtronger Temptations, and greater danger to the Soul.

3. Think much and ſeriouſly on the great and certain things which firſt converted and reſolved your Wills: They are the ſame, and as good now as they were then, and you ſhould know them better. A man that loveth and chooſeth rationally, knoweth why he doth it: And the fixing and renewing of your knowledge and belief, is it that muſt fix your Love and Choice. The greateſt things forgotten do not affect us.

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4. Flatter not your ſelves with the hope of living long on Earth, and look not at Death and the following Life as a great way off. The power of tempting Vanities lyeth in mens hopes of long enjoying them: To a man under the ſentence of preſent death, they have little power. And the beſt things that ſeem far off, do not much and powerfully affect us. Live therefore as dying men, and you will have the mind and choice of dying men.

5. See that your Meditations and Belief be practical, and brought cloſe to the Heart: And take not bare *thinking of* God and Heaven as enough, but know that holy thoughts fall ſhort of their uſe and end, if they come not to the Heart and Life. It is not the Speculative diſputing Chriſtian that hath the fixed Will and Choice, unleſs he be alſo a hearty practiſing experienced Chriſtian: He that hath a heavenly heart and converſation, and hath felt the power and ſweetneſs of things ſpiritual, will hold them faſt; when bare hear-ſay and opinion will let them go.

6. Depend in the conſtant exerciſe of Faith and Prayer, upon the Love of the Father,

Father, the Grace of the Son, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, and ſeek to pleaſe God as your greateſt pleaſure, and ſo live by the Faith of the Son of God, that you may ſay it is Chriſt that liveth in you, *Gal.* 2. 19, 20. And then none can take you out of his hands, nor ſeparate you from the love of God, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. nor take your choſen portion from you.

In a word, that your choice may be unchangable, you muſt firmly truſt to the unchangable promiſe of the unchangable God, for the unchangable Kingdom, as purchaſed by Chriſt, and our title ſealed by his Spirit: The World and the Fleſh muſt be crucified, dead and buryed to you by the virtue of his Croſs believed, and you muſt be riſen with him to a heavenly mind, and hope, and converſation: Every weight muſt be laid by, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, *Heb.* 12. 1. And we muſt not look back to the forſaken world behind us, but preſs forward for the prize unto the Mark, *Phil.* 3. Looking ſtill to Jeſus the Author and finiſher of our Faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs and deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at

at the right hand of the Throne of God: We muſt conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of Sinners, leſt we be weary and faint: We muſt count nothing dear to us that we may finiſh our courſe with joy; and muſt know by faith *that our labour is not in vain in the Lord*, if we would *be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *We muſt ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*, as for a Kingdom which cannot be moved; and all this in dependance on the Grace of Chriſt, *Heb.* 12. 28. Conſiderate men know by ſenſe and experience that this world is Vanity and Vexation: If we know alſo by a living conſtant Faith, that a better world of holy joy is the near and certain portion of the faithful, it will fix the will in a reſolved choice, and we ſhall not be like prophane *Eſau* that ſold his Birthright for one morſel; and the Living Eternal God will be eternally our Life and Joy, to whom all the Bleſſed with Chriſt ſhall give Glory and Praiſe for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.